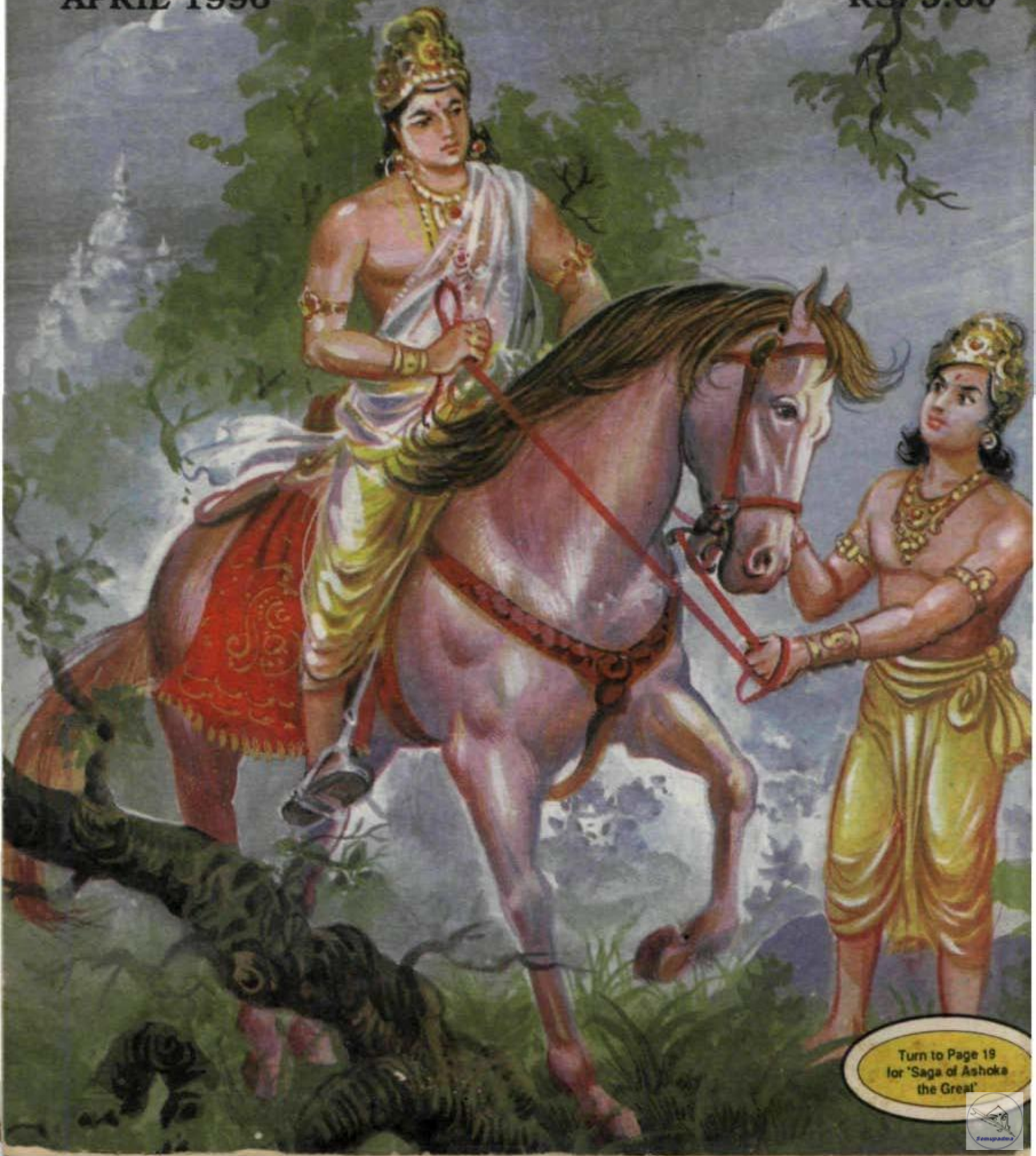


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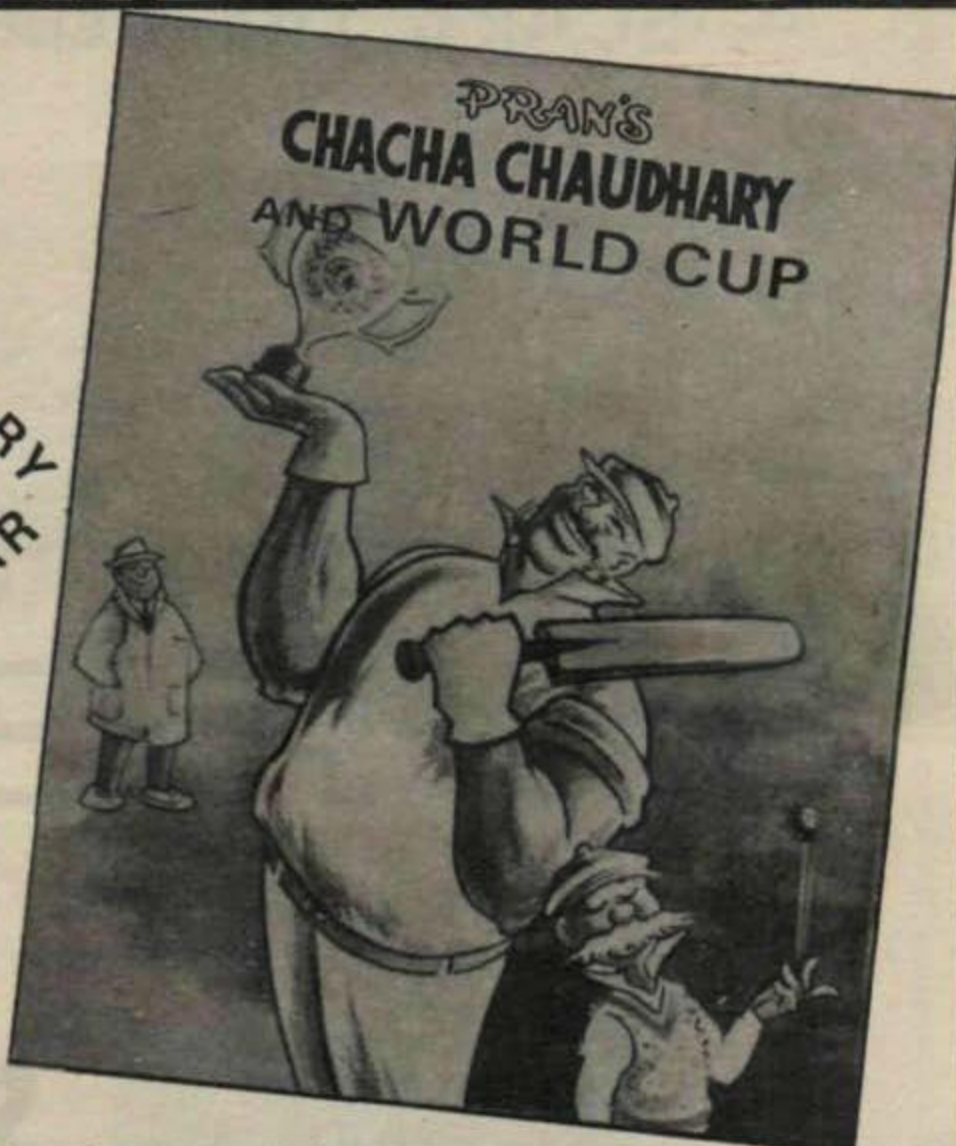
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NEXT ISSUE

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HOW COULD I BE KING? : Mahasen, King of Mahimapuri, is roaming the kingdom incognito. He meets with an accident and injures himself. A poor man rushes to his aid. The king is happy and wants to help him. "What help can you give?" asks the man. "Whatever you wish for," assures the king, "Oh, then, I wish to become a king!" says the man, coolly. Mahasen tries to dissuade him. The king's money is public money, he cannot touch it; if anything goes wrong, the king alone is blamed; the king does not have any peace of mind; a poor man in the hut is that way better off. He is not convinced. His reasons for becoming a king are different. What are they?

ALL BECAUSE OF A BAD DREAM : Kamala is from a rich family. She is arrogant. She does not mend her ways when she marries and goes to stay with her husband and mother-in-law. There is no love lost between the two. Kamala has a bad dream. She confides in her husband. As the dream has happened just before dawn, it is a bad omen. "What tragedy is in store for us?" sighs her husband. Is he proved right?

PLUS the next instalment of the exciting **COASTAL JOURNEYS** and **GOLDEN HOUR** to keep you busy during the vacation.

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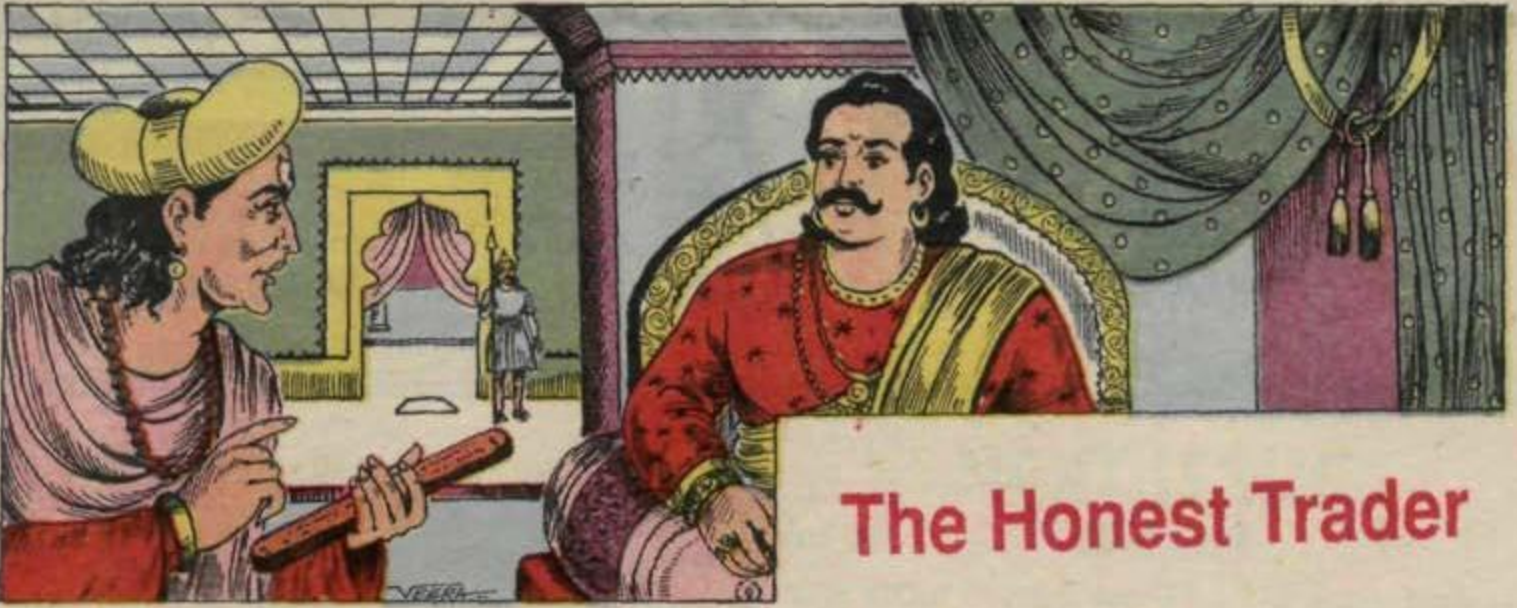
Music has its charm

If children are taught music, they will never think of doing any mischief or committing a crime. This view was expressed by a well-known musician of India the other day. Perhaps he was echoing the sentiments of Shakespeare who had said: "The man that hath no music in himself is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils."

According to the Indian artiste, music has emanated from nature. Music is basically sound. We have the howling wind, the gurgling waters, and the rustling leaves. Whatever sounds the birds make is termed as bird-song. The roar of the lion, the growl of the tiger, and the trumpeting of the elephant may be frightening in the first instance, but they can thrill anyone and may become 'musical' when one gets used to hearing these sounds.

In Hans Christian Andersen's famous story "The pied piper of Hameln", the hero plays the pipe and its music attracts all the mice in the town to come out and follow him. Music gives bliss to the singer and the listener alike. How, then, can they think of such base qualities as hatred, enmity, jealousy, and dishonesty, which are generally the causes of crime?

One can easily forget oneself in music, which purifies one's mind and helps one to cultivate equanimity. Seeds of mischief and crime will not grow in such minds.



The Honest Trader

Lakhimpur was a village where Lakshmana was a popular trader. Everybody liked the ghee he prepared and sold. It had a good flavour, and could be preserved for long. Even if kept for one or two months, the flavour would last.

Zamindar Lakshmipati was going through a bad period. He was beset with many family problems. He thought he would consult an astrologer.

The astrologer suggested a *navagraha homa* to propitiate the nine planets. But who would perform the homa? Of course, the *pujari* of the temple, said the astrologer. The priest then prepared a list of items needed for the homa. A major item was ghee.

The *pujari* sent for the trader. "Look here, Lakshmana," instructed the priest, "the ghee is for a homa. So, it must be pure. It is meant for a

holy ritual, that's why I am specially insisting on its quality. We need ten measures in all."

As there was still a week to go for the homa, Lakshmana agreed to supply the ghee well in advance, though he was not so sure whether he would be able to prepare all the ten measures asked for. Somehow or other, he managed to prepare the entire quantity. The next day he would have taken it to the Zamindar's house, but a relation of the Zamindar met him and asked for just one measure of good ghee. His need was urgent as his wife had taken ill and the doctor had prescribed a massage with a jack leaf dipped in warm ghee.

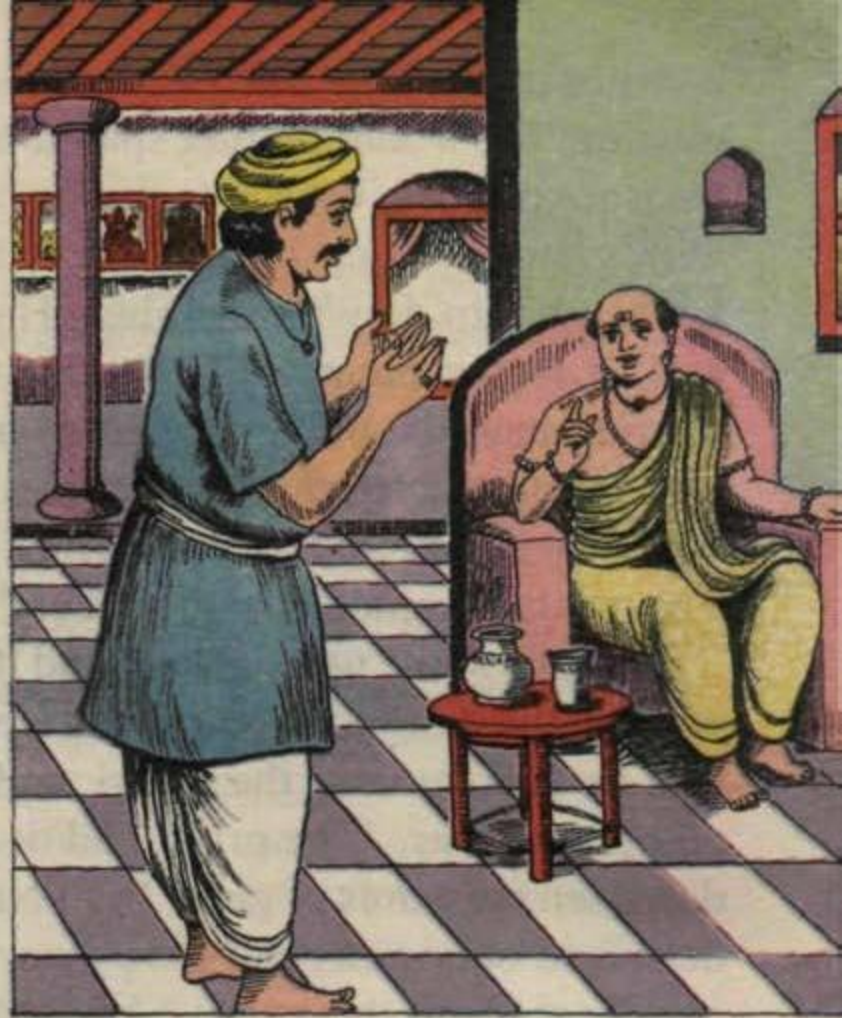
Lakshmana was in a dilemma. He was on the one hand feeling pleased with himself as he had the ghee required by the Zamindar kept ready for delivery. On the other, here was someone related to the Zamindar

himself needing ghee urgently, that too to save a life. What could be more important – a homa or medical treatment?

The trader thought for a while. If the Zamindar were to know that he had refused ghee for a relation of his, wouldn't he get angry with him? The homa was another two days away, and he could try for one more measure in two days time. So, he spared one measure and gave it to the Zamindar's relation.

But however much he tried, Lakshmana could not secure one more measure of ghee. Anyway, he did not wait. He took the nine measures and delivered it at the Zamindar's residence, where he met the pujari and confided in him.

The priest smiled. "Lakshmana, don't worry," he said reassuringly. "You've been honest about it. You didn't think of adulterating the stuff to make ten measures. I appreciate that. To be honest, the homa really needs only nine measures. I had ordered an extra measure just to be on the safe side. Actually, the ghee is to be given away to ten persons after the homa, as part of the ritual. You've already given one measure to a relation of the Zamindar. We shall take him as the tenth man."



Lakshmana heaved a sigh. "Oh! What a relief!" he said. "I was wondering whether I had done something wrong by sparing one measure for the Zamindar's relation. You now tell me that the homa really needs only nine measures. I'm so happy."

The homa was performed. Whether it had its effect or not, the problems the Zamindar faced disappeared one after the other, and his relations became friendly with him once again. Moreover, the woman who was ill was completely cured of her illness.

A few days later, Lakshmana had



a visitor in his shop. The Zamindar's relation, for whom he had spared a measure of ghee, wished to return it with gratitude. Lakshmana did not know what to do with the ghee. He took it to the pujari. "Sir, I was a worried man the other day, but you gave me great relief. For my sake, you must accept this ghee from me." The priest accepted it with grace.

Somehow, the news spread and it reached the Zamindar's ears also. He sent for Lakshmana, the pujari, and all his relations. "The priest had ordered ten measures of ghee. But you delivered only nine, and gave away one measure to the pujari," he said turning to Lakshmana. "And the homa was performed with the nine measures you supplied."

Lakshmana realised that the Zamindar was suspecting dishonesty on the part of the priest. "Sir, this is what had actually happened,"

he explained. "I gave one measure of ghee to the pujari only after the homa and not before" explained the trader. "For the homa, he had ordered ten measures. I was able to deliver only nine measures, but he assured me that the homa really needed only nine measures, and that he had asked for an extra measure to be on the safe side. I prepared ten measures for the homa, but I had to spare one measure for none else than a relation of yours. His need was urgent and that ghee could save a life. After the homa when I got back one measure, I thought I should hand it to the pujari as he had actually ordered ten measures. The requirements of the homa were met and whatever was ordered was supplied in full quantity. There was no dishonest dealing at all."

"Sabaash!" exclaimed the Zamindar. "I compliment everybody, you Lakshmana especially."



A WINDOW ON THE WORLD

Towards closer ties

Of special interest to India were the general elections in Australia held on March 2, and our hopes were not belied when the new Prime Minister, Mr. John Howard, soon after his election, promised closer ties with India which, he said, "is emerging as South Asia's most dynamic economic power".

After remaining in the Opposition for 13 years, when the country was ruled by the Labour Party, Mr. Howard's Liberal-National Party Coalition won the March elections with a comfortable majority, bagging over 90 seats in the 148-member House of Representatives. The ruling Labour Party, which had 79 seats at the time of elections, had to be content with 50 seats.

The people of the famous cricketing nation Australia (capital : Canberra) felt that the Labour Party, led by Mr. Paul Keating, had been too long in power and they yearned for a change – not so much in the country's foreign or defence policy, but a change of personalities and lesser concentration of power in the hands of trade unions. These unions, with the backing of the Labour Party, used to dictate terms whenever a settlement took place between employees and employ-

ers, who found it difficult to take action against employees even in matters of discipline.

The two party coalition included among their poll promises a system of contracts and agreements between individual employees and the management, without involving the trade unions. This was appealing to both the employees and employers who actively supported the Coalition.

The Keating government's foreign policy suffered a setback when it alienated Britain by speaking against the



monarchy. Soon after the swearing in of the country's 22nd Governor General, Sir William Dean, on February 16, Mr. Keating in his election speeches made it known that Australia would have an elected President by the turn of the century and that the Olympic Games of 2000 A.D., given to Sydney, would be held in a

free Republic.

A lawyer by profession, 56-year-old John Howard was Treasurer (Finance Minister) in the Malcolm Frazer cabinet till 1983.

Australia has already launched a promotion campaign in India, which will get a fillip when Mr. Howard keeps his date with India in October. Statistics show that while Australian Universities received 1,250 students from India in 1994, this figure went up to 2,500 last year. The two countries can really look forward to stronger ties in the future.



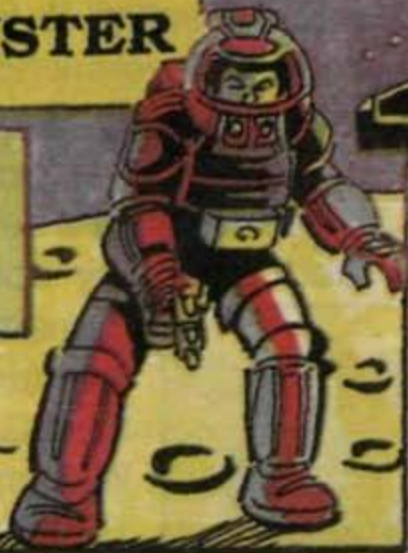


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Golden Hour

THE SPACE MONSTER

SURYA - THE FIRST INDIAN ASTRONAUT HAS LANDED ON THE MOON



SUDDENLY

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WOW!



SURYA IS FAST WITH HIS LASER BLASTER!

THE MONSTER DIES!



WHAT IS THE MISTAKE THE WRITER HAS MADE WHILE TELLING THE STORY?



1. The first Indian cosmonaut when asked how India appeared from above answered 'Sare Jahan Se Achha'. Name the spaceman and the year of his space journey.

Golden Hour TEASERS



3. This piece of moving rock is called Ceres and is about 950 kilometres in diameter. Where does this piece of rock exist? What is special about it?



7. Can you tell what region of India these people come from by looking at their costumes?

4. These wooden images of Lord Vishnu, his brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra are worshipped in a 12th century temple. Name the famous temple.



5. On 1 February 1996, Mr. Frog began to come out of the 30 - metre deep well where he had lived all his life. He climbed 3 metres each day but at night, he would slide back 2 metres. On what day and month did he come out of the well?



2. Sawai Raja Jai Singh built 'Jantar Mantar' the first observatory in India at Delhi, followed by a chain of observatories at Jaipur, Mathura, Ujjain and Varanasi. In 1728 AD he built this structure, believed to be the world's biggest sun dial. What is it called?

$$\exists 4 + 4 i = 1$$

6. You can correct this equation by moving two matchsticks. Try it!



MAKE A 3-D MASK!



1. Blow a balloon so that it is a little bigger than your head in size. Tie up the end with a piece of thread.



2. Cut up small pieces of paper of about 3cm x 2 cm.

3. Paste these pieces of paper all over the balloon, leaving out a small area at the bottom. When this layer of paper dries up, paste one more layer of paper piece by piece and when this too dries, paste the third layer.



4. Give time to the paper layers to dry up properly, then let the air out of the balloon and pull it out from inside the paper layers. Now you have an empty shell. Cut out a hole at the bottom of the shell big enough for your head to pass through.

5. Cut out holes for eyes and nose. Now give the mask whatever appearance you want, using paint and make-up materials. Here are a few ideas.



Draw an Elephant IN THREE EASY STEPS.



Simply Clumsy!

Aparajita of Godbhaga, Orissa, wants to know, what is meant by the idiom 'bull in a China shop'.

China shop is a place where you go to buy tableware (cups, saucers, plates, etc.) made of porcelain – a kind of clay – originally found in China. Imagine a situation in which a bull gets into a China shop and leaves it in disarray with broken pieces of China all over. If you are clumsy in a certain situation, you will look like a bull in a China shop! You will look like one who lacks the delicacy that the situation calls for.

What is meant by the word 'sic' invariably appearing within brackets? asks R.L. Bhandari, of Hyderabad.

You write (sic) after a word or expression when you quote something which someone else has written, because you feel it (the word or expression) looks odd or incorrect and you wish to indicate to the reader that you have not changed the way it has been spelt or written. Like the word 'smokeing' and you want to repeat it exactly as it is written. Whenever you come across the usage (sic), look for the oddity of the word or words preceding it. The word 'sic' really means 'so' or 'thus'.

What does it mean 'to have cheek'? asks D.V.R. Dheeraj, of Kothagudem.

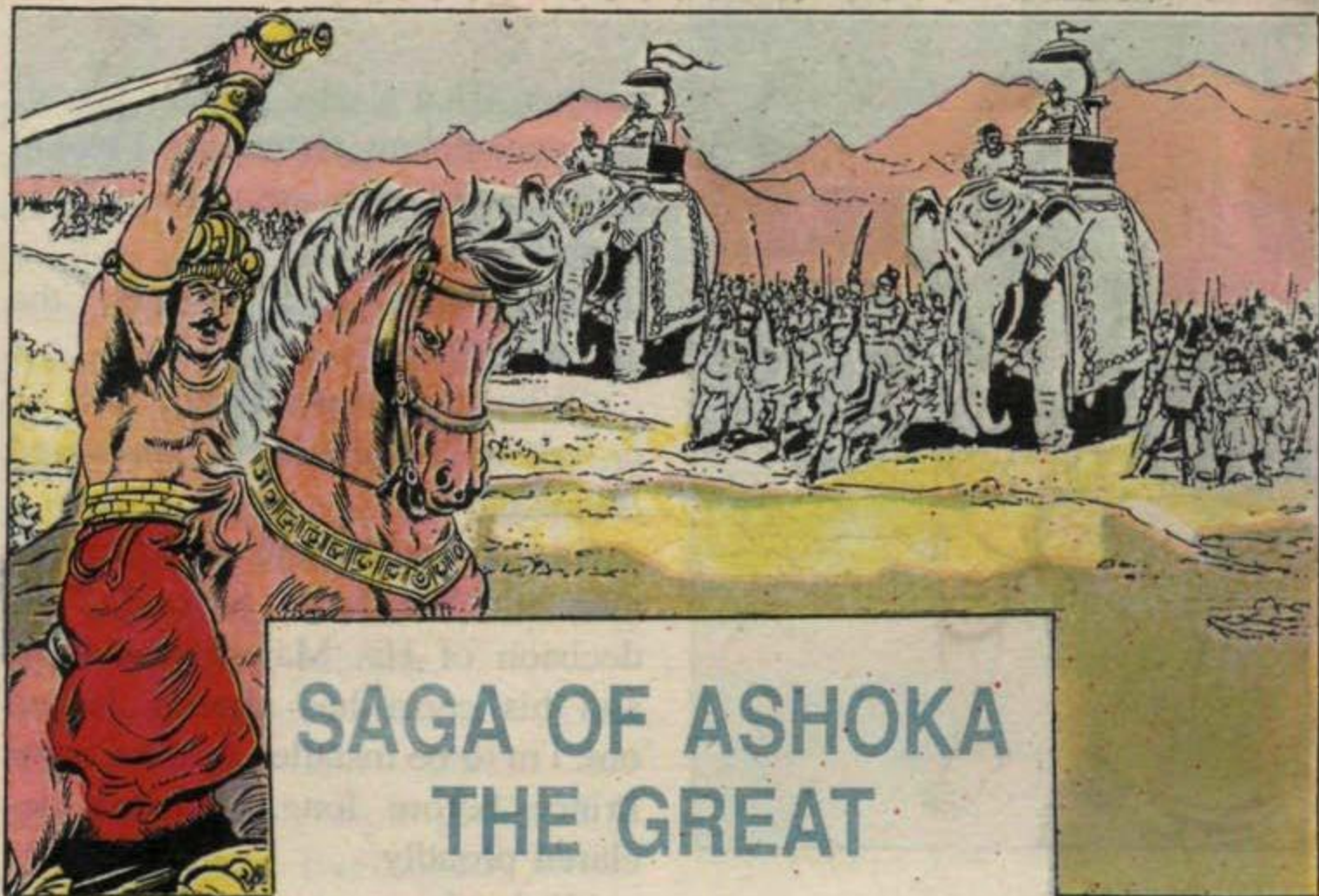
The word 'cheek' has an informal meaning – effrontery or impudence. 'To have cheek' will, therefore, mean that a person is not afraid or embarrassed to do or say things which can annoy or shock others. Suppose your friend borrows a book, goes and loses it, and comes to you again to borrow another book. How will you react? You will say, "He had the cheek to ask for a book after losing the one I had lent him."

P. Vijayaraghavan, of Calicut, asks: what is 'rule of thumb'?

If you do something by 'rule of thumb', you are only doing it the way you feel is the best at that time, rather than following a precedent or a fixed set of rules.

Who is a 'pastmaster'? asks Mitarani Behera, of Mandasila, Orissa.

One who has passed as a master, meaning a qualified, accomplished, or thoroughly proficient (in a subject or an area of activity) person. He is thus a passed master or pastmaster! in short an expert. Haven't you come across people who are pastmasters in bluffing?



SAGA OF ASHOKA THE GREAT

[The story so far : King Chandragupta who, with the help of the intelligent Brahmin, Chanakya, founded the Maurya dynasty over the kingdom of Magadha, was succeeded to the throne by his son, Vindusar. King Vindusar married a commoner's daughter, Subhadra, who gave birth to a son, Ashoka. King Vindusar had five other sons from his earlier queens. The eldest son, Susima, almost hated Ashoka.]

One morning the peace of the temple precincts in the city of Pataliputra was shattered as two young voices tried to outshout each other. It was a quarrel between the two princes, Susima and Ashoka. Ashoka was returning from the temple, after offering some fruits and flowers to the deity on his mother's behalf, when he was

knocked down by a speeding horse coming from behind him. The rider was none other than Prince Susima.

Ashoka sprang to his feet and pursued the horse. Not only did he catch up with it, but he also managed to stop it, jumping up and pulling at the reins which were in Susima's grips.

Susima was obliged to dismount.

3. ASHOKA TAKES UP A CHALLENGE



"How dare you knock me down?" demanded Ashoka.

"I did not knock you down, it is my horse which did it!" answered Susima in an air of arrogance. He tried to remount, but Ashoka caught hold of his hand to prevent him getting on to the horse.

"What right do you have to ride a horse if you cannot control it even on such a broad and lonely road?" asked Ashoka.

"Who are you to question my right? Do you know who I am?" asked Susima.

Ashoka laughed. "I know who you are, my unworthy, vainglorious

brother. That's why I spare you of any punishment. Otherwise I would have taught you an unforgettable lesson."

"How dare you threaten the Crown Prince!"

"Who the Crown Prince will be is yet to be decided!" answered Ashoka.

Susima laughed in an offensive manner. "You fool!" he said. "The decision of His Majesty the King and his court has already leaked out. I'm to be installed as the Crown Prince before long," Susima declared proudly.

"If that is so, you should be even more careful in your conduct," cautioned Ashoka and he added, "but I'm sure, you're lying. If not, I'll challenge the decision!"

"What! You've the cheek to say that you'll challenge the king's decision?" demanded an angry Susima, as he raised his hand to slap Ashoka.

In time Ashoka caught hold of Susima's hand. As Susima tried to get it released from Ashoka's grip, both were locked in a wrestle.

They were no longer young boys. Years had passed since Chanakya had conducted a test and had found Ashoka to be the cleverest of all the

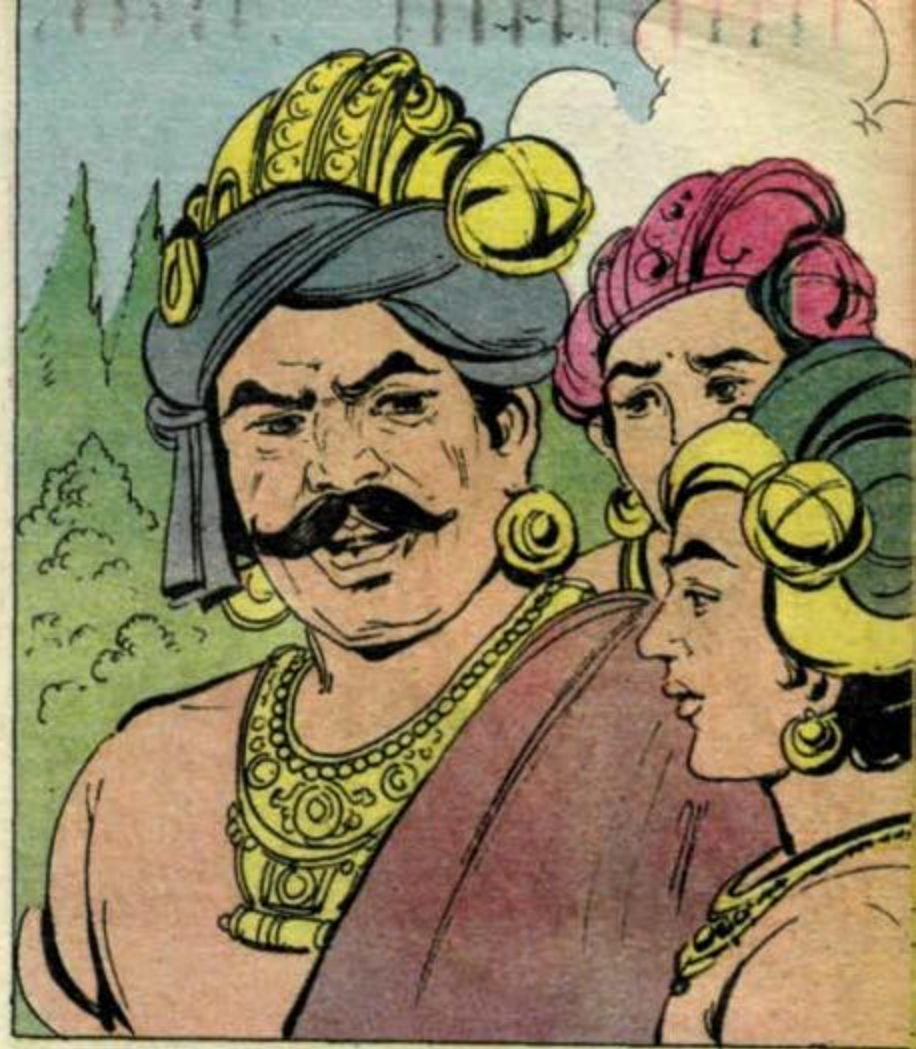
princes. Chanakya had since retired as the king's Prime Minister and had died. The king himself was not keeping well. Nobles of the city of Pataliputra were aware of the feud between the two princes. But it had not come to the open in such an ugly manner. Nobody could have imagined two grandsons of the great monarch, Chandragupta, and sons of the able King Vindusar, fighting with each other publicly.

Several people watched them with curiosity and sadness and more and more people gathered at different spots. But nobody could muster enough courage to go near them and pacify them.

Luckily, it so happened that Khallataka, the wise man who had become the Prime Minister after Chanakya's retirement, happened to gallop by. The princes respected him. They stopped fighting and stood like good boys the moment their eyes fell on him.

"My dear princes, isn't it most unfortunate that you should behave in this manner before the eyes of the public? What will your illustrious father think of you if he were to come to know of this?" asked the minister.

Ashoka did not speak. But



Susima said with a sneer, "I'm not expected to take anyone's insolence lying down! Am I not the Crown Prince?"

"I'm afraid, you're not yet the Crown Prince, O Prince Susima!" said the Prime Minister. "But isn't it sufficient that you are the eldest prince and you should move about with dignity?"

"I wished to compel this chap to respect my dignity!" replied Susima.

"My dear Prince, you cannot prove your dignity by assaulting somebody. You have to establish it through your good behaviour, your





kindness, tolerance, and wisdom. In any case, you should not cut a sorry figure before the public," the Prime Minister reminded him gravely.

"I didn't cut a sorry figure! In fact, I would have skinned this chap alive in a little while! It is he who would have then cut a sorry figure before the public," Susima said rudely.

"Look here, Prince Susima, you must not refer to your brother in this manner. He too is a prince — and the son of your father."

"He may be a son of my father, but his mother was only a servant in the palace, obeying the orders of

my mother and other queens. I do not recognise him as a prince."

At this Ashoka was about to pounce upon Susima. But the Prime Minister checked him. Ashoka fumed and cried out, "I will show who is a greater prince — you or I. I take the vow today — let the Prime Minister himself and all those present here bear witness to it — that I will avenge your insult to my mother. It is not you who will succeed to the throne of Magadha, but..."

The Prime Minister clamped his palm on Ashoka's mouth and did not allow him to complete his statement. He then shouted at both the princes. "In the name of His Majesty, King Vindusar Maurya, I ask you both to retire into the palace immediately."

Then, looking at the small throngs of people looking agape at the two princes, the Prime Minister raised his voice further and said, "I command you all to disperse!"

The people obeyed the command at once. The princes, looking daggers at each other, went away in slightly different directions, though quite reluctantly.

The Prime Minister had hardly got down from his horse at the en-

trance of his own house when he was greeted by a personal attendant of the king. "Sir, the king wishes to talk to you immediately," said the messenger.

"I too would like to see him immediately," said the Prime Minister. He turned and walked towards the palace which was close by and then entered the king's private audience chamber.

The king who looked rather ill, was relaxing on a divan, his right arm resting on a pillow. Before him stood a high officer of the court, who had arrived from Taxila. The king showed a sign, asking the Prime Minister to take a seat.

The great Chandragupta had annexed the region around Taxila to his empire. He had stationed a governor at Taxila who ran the administration of the region on behalf of the king.

"Welcome, Khallataka, but there is bad news for us. Let this officer give it to you," said King Vindusar.

The officer greeted the Prime minister, and said, "The merchants and the nobility of Taxila have revolted against the Maurya authority. They want to be separated from Magadha."

"Strange!" commented the Prime



Minister.

"It is strange so far as you are concerned, for, you have done nothing wrong to them. But it is not strange for the governor or the officers like me. We have the secret report that the Greeks are instigating the revolt. They cannot forget the fact that the great Chandragupta had driven them away. Now, they're anxious to harass us. They would like the empire to disintegrate."

"What's the nature of the revolt?" asked the Prime Minister.

"Leaders of the revolt remain behind the scene. They buy the services and sympathy of the common





folk who are burning and plundering the houses of the officers of Magadha. A number of our soldiers stationed there have been killed," reported the officer.

"Since they have already taken recourse to violence, we must put the revolt down with greater force. My lord, you should order our commander to get ready for a military expedition to Taxila," said the Prime Minister.

"I cannot look blankly and see my father's empire crumbling. I wish I could lead a regiment myself!" said King Vindusar as he sighed.

"My lord, you'll lead the regiment, though not personally, but through the person of any one of your six brave sons!" suggested the Prime Minister.

"What a crisis! I was looking forward to the festive occasion of making Susima the Crown Prince!" murmured the king. "Now we've to wait!"

"My lord, we should wait. Let Susima lead an army against the rebels and crush the rebellion first," said the Prime Minister. "That should earn him merit and the trust of the people of Magadha." Then, after a moment's pause, he said again, "May I suggest, my lord, that instead of our directly asking Prince Susima to lead the army, let us create a situation when he would volunteer to do it on his own. Let us prepare the ground for it by calling all the princes to your presence and informing them about the need for one of them to proceed to Taxila to put an end to the rebellion there. No doubt, Prince Susima, being the eldest, would step forward to take up the challenge. In fact, he has already come to know that he is our choice for the position of the Crown Prince."

The king agreed with his Prime



Minister's suggestion. The princes were summoned into the chamber. As they arrived, Prince Susima looked suspiciously at the Prime Minister under the impression that he had already reported to the king all about the ugly scene he and Ashoka made in the streets.

"My boys," said the king. "You all are in your late teens or early twenties. It is time for you to bear the various burdens of the state. To begin with, one of you must proceed forthwith to Taxila, at the head of an army, and suppress a rebellion which has marred the peaceful atmosphere of that region. Who should it be?"

The king expected Susima to come forward readily. But he kept standing in silence. So did the other princes except Ashoka who took a forward step.

"My lord, my services are at your

disposal. I'm confident of delivering the goods. Order me and I will march upon Taxila as soon as the commander can provide me with a battalion."

"Bravo!" exclaimed the king. "Get ready for it," he told Ashoka. Then, with derision he told the rest, "You can retreat into your petty holes and continue to live, play hide and seek, and steal the cheese and enjoy it as the rats do."

He then shouted, "Get out of my sight, you cowards!"

The princes fled. Ashoka alone tarried and bowed to his father and took leave of him in a befitting manner.

"Now I remember what our late mentor, Chanakya, had pointed out. He had found Ashoka to be the fittest among all the princes," the king told his Prime Minister in a low voice.

(To continue)



NEWS FLASH

Don't read, but 'hear'

Books and reading—one is the corollary of the other. For the sake of preservation, books are nowadays converted into micro films, especially by libraries. If your computer is connected to these libraries, you can call the pages on your computer screen and read. However, the latest is, you can also 'hear' books! And probably recall how you listened to someone in your family – like the grandmother or grandfather – read out to you bed-time stories. Now books are being converted into audio-cassettes. Play the cassette from your 2-in-one and you will hear someone – not necessarily the author – read the book for you. How do you like the idea? The first attempt in India, it is claimed, has been with a novel in Malayalam by the well-known writer C. Radhakrishnan. An artiste attached to All India Radio has lent her voice. The cassette was released early February

and the reports are it has met with good demand.

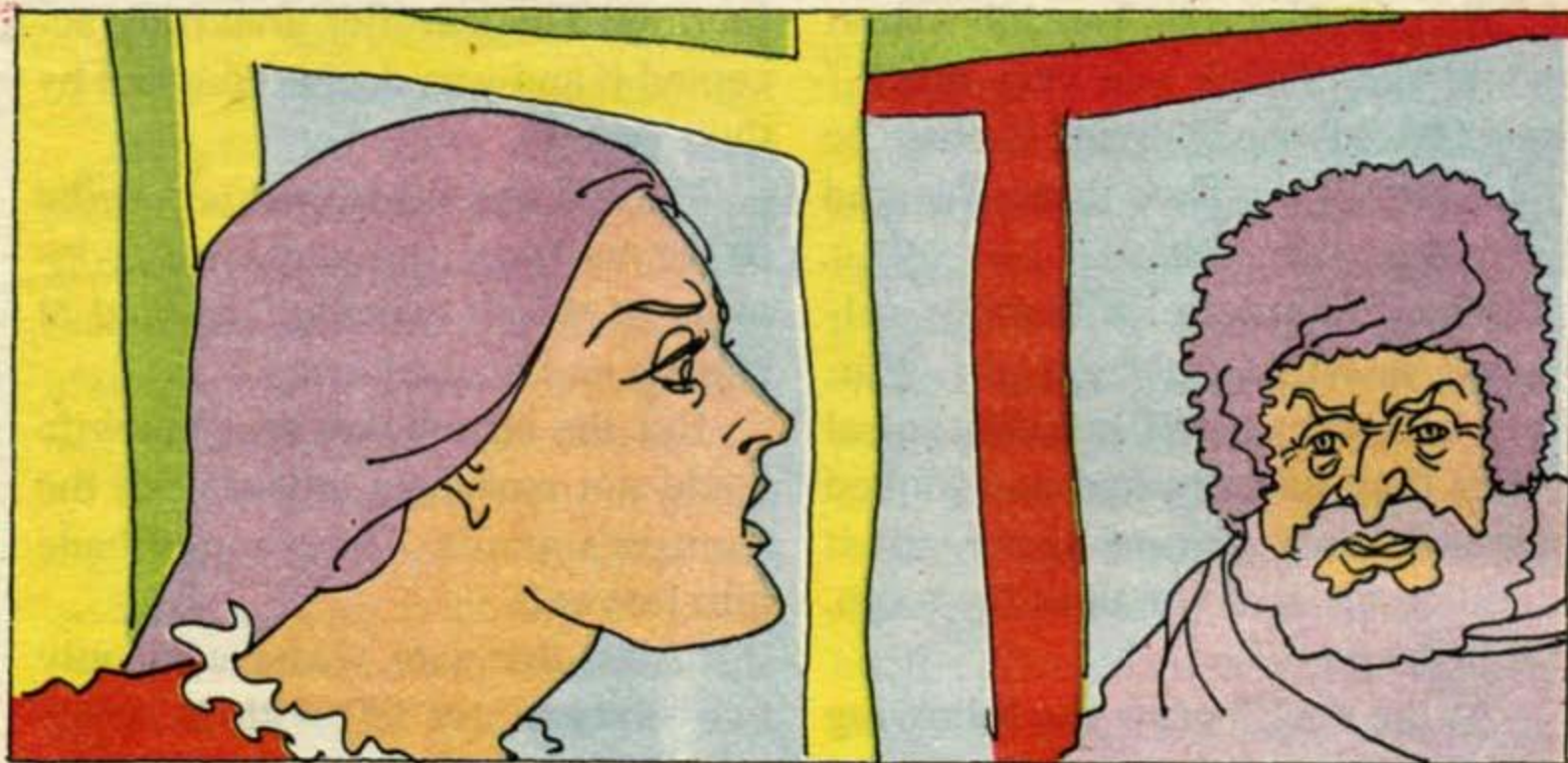
Thief attends books auction

Duncan Jevons of Suffolk, in England, was a theology student. He was so deeply interested in the subject that he wanted to possess as many books as possible. Well, he would not buy them, but chose an easy method to acquire them—steal! In 30 years, from the age of 19, he stole 52,000 books. One day, he was caught while trying to steal a book in Carlisle, a city in the north. Recently, the police handed 12,000 of his books to an auctioneer. Duncan attended the auction, but did not bid. That reminds us of a joke. A visitor to that famous American humorist Mark Twain remarked about the many books lying scattered all over the place. "Why don't you put them on racks?" he suggested. "Good idea," agreed Mark Twain, adding, "but nobody lends racks!" Caught the point?

Birthday gift

What will a 16-year-old girl wish for as a birthday gift? The U.S. President Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton's daughter, Chelsea, was away in school when three private radio stations in the U.S.A. sent three motor cars—all different models and makes—as birthday gifts, which were politely returned. And the parents decided on a unique gift—a ticket for a drama. They took her to the prestigious National Theatre, to watch the famous French classic "*Les Miserables*" by Victor Hugo. Chelsea thoroughly enjoyed the evening—though there was no birthday cake with 16 candles to blow out.

THE PARTING BOON



A long time ago, an old man made his weary way to a sleepy little town. It was already dark and cold, and the stranger knocked at the door of a large mansion.

"Kind lady, would you provide this poor soul with some shelter for the night?" he asked the plump round woman who answered his call.

"What? How dare you ask me to put you up in my house? Be off at once, you vagabond, before I let the dogs loose on you!" shouted the rich haughty landlady.

So, the tired old traveller resumed

walking and he soon came to a humble dwelling, not far away from the haughty woman's mansion.

"Good folks, won't you let me in to the warmth of your little home? The night is so cold!" he asked after gently tapping at the window.

"Do come in, O weary wayfarer!" called the shoemaker's wife in kinder tones. "Only, you may find our modest shelter cramped and uncomfortable. I hope you don't mind."

The stranger gratefully entered the hut and found that the family was indeed very poor. They had nothing



but tattered clothes to protect themselves from the bitter winter.

The table was soon laid with only bread and water, and the guest was called to join them for dinner.

"I am not hungry, I ate but a short while ago. Thank you very much," said the old man. Untying his bag, he took out all the food there was and gave it to them instead.

The shoemaker's family relished it with great delight. For, they had never tasted such delicacies! After they had finished and looked around, they found their guest cuddled up in a corner of the room, fast asleep.

At the cock's crow the following

day, the old man rose and prepared to go. He thanked his kind hosts for their noble hospitality. Paupers though they were, the hosts even offered him a piece of silver for his onward journey. The traveller gratefully accepted it and was deeply touched by their gesture.

"Dear folks, *what you start doing in the morning, you will surely continue to do till evening,*" he said at parting and walked away.

But the shoemaker and his wife could not make out anything of the stranger's words. They simply bade him farewell.

"Alas, dear wife, we have but only two silver pieces left with us now,"



said the shoemaker, opening his little pouch.

"One! Two!..." he counted. "But what's this?" He saw a third one shining in his bag!

"Oh! I was mistaken, we have three silver pieces!" he said happily.

He had but taken out the third piece of silver, lo and behold, another at once took its place! Thus it continued and the little pouch never remained empty. It was now getting heavier and heavier with coins.

With amazement writ large on their faces, the poor shoemaker and his wife went on gathering the coins one after another out of their little bag, which seemed to have turned

magical all of a sudden. Only when the sun dipped on the western horizon did the pouch stop yielding any more silver. But the piles of coins that spread before them were more than enough to last them a score of lifetimes!

It was then that the good shoemaker and his wife realised what actually their guest had meant by his parting words. Tears of gratitude welled out of their eyes. They thanked providence for being blessed with such good fortune.

It so happened, that very evening the rich landlady marched into their hut to collect her rent which was long due from them. She banged open the





rickety door and stepped in with a big thud.

"You!...Yo...uu!" She stuck midway, her mouth agape.

For, what did she see in front of her? Her poor tenants sitting amidst piles of glittering silver!

The shoemaker's wife not only cleared their debt but also gave away an extra hundred coins. Then, without holding anything back, she told her rich stingy neighbour how the blessings of the old traveller had brought them this great wealth.

"Oh! Dear me! How stupid I was to have turned him away last night," lamented the plump round woman

and hurried home as fast as her stalky legs could carry her huge body.

Calling her servant, she said with utmost urgency, "Now, harness the horse and speed after that old loafer. Bring him back to me at any cost or else you will be sacked rightaway."

The young servant immediately set out on his mission. He drove for a whole day and at last caught up with the stranger. But the old man refused to return.

"Grandpa, do have some sympathy. If I fail to take you to my mistress, she will simply throw me out of work," pleaded the boy helplessly.

"Don't you worry, my child. In that case I'll go with you," said the old man climbing into the cart.

The landlady was impatiently waiting at her gate. As soon as they arrived, she welcomed the old man with smiles and a dozen bows. Then, leading him into the house, she fed him sumptuously and finally laid up a soft feathery bed by the hearth.

"Rest awhile, good old man, and have lovely dreams," she said in her sweetest tone. "Only, pardon me for having mistaken you for a ruffian yesterday. You know, these days my eyesight deceives me when it gets dark."

The old man listened to her in silence and then went to sleep. The next morning he did not leave. He stayed on for a second day, then for another and many more days. The wealthy hostess treated him most kindly. But inwardly she was fuming in anger.

'When will this good-for-nothing vagabond get out of my house?' she wondered.

But she did not turn him out, for, then all the trouble she had taken on his account would go in vain.

To her joy, at last one morning, the guest prepared to leave. The hostess, with great expectations, went to see him off. Without a word the old man walked to the gate and out of it.

"Grandpa, aren't you forgetting something? Wouldn't you give me also your parting advice and bless me?" the hostess asked impatiently.

"That which you start doing in the morning, you will continue to do till evening," said the traveller looking at her with a smile and went on his way.

The lady, without even bidding him a proper good-bye, rushed into her house. She quickly grabbed her little pouch and was about to begin counting, then woe begone, a mouse suddenly scuttled over her feet and she jumped in fright.

Alas, the plump round landlady, holding her little pouch, continued to jump up and down all day long, wailing and shouting at the top of her voice. Only when the sun set and the night approached did she stop jumping. She at once slumped onto the floor and fell fast asleep.

The following morning she woke up a different person, certainly thinner by several pounds and perhaps wiser, too.

- Retold by Anup Kishore Das



A reward for acting

The King of Vidisha was a kind-hearted soul. He would never turn back anybody who met him for help. He used to distribute charity left and right, much to the chagrin of his minister, who found it difficult to check the king's munificence and generosity.

One day, a woman came to the *darbar*. "Your majesty! My husband has passed away," she wailed before the king. "My only son is bedridden, and I don't have any money for his treatment. Your generosity is well-known. Please help me!"

The king's heart melt. He gave her a hundred rupees. The very next day, she was back in the *darbar*, this time handcuffed and escorted by the king's soldiers. "Your majesty!" they complained. "What she told you yesterday was all a lie. It was all acting and you were carried away by her representation. She deserves punishment."

The king only laughed. "Is that so? But I was convinced by her story, by the way she described her sorrow. That shows she's good at acting. And acting is an art. So she deserves a reward for her fine piece of acting."

The king gave her a hundred rupees and told the soldiers, "You set her free!"



Goa

Text : Meera Nair ♦ Artist : Goutam Sen

Legend has it that once when Parasurama was seeking a place to meditate, he decided to shoot an arrow and go wherever it fell. The arrow fell into the Arabian Sea. The waters parted, creating an idyllic land - Goa.

Archaeological finds have shown that Gowapur, as Goa was called earlier, was an important port, strategically located on an Arab trade route even in the 3rd century B.C. It was ruled by a series of Hindu dynasties until the 15th century, when it fell into the hands of Adil Shah, the founder of the Adilshahi dynasty of Bijapur. The Portuguese acquired it in 1510 and ruled for 451 years, till 1961, when Goa became a part of India.

Goa has a 105-kilometre-long coastline. From Terekhol in the north to Polem in the south one can see miles of white sands, separated by rocky headlands and estuaries. The Portuguese built a fort on each of these headlands to guard the approach from the sea and the route up the rivers to the inland settlements.

The most impressive of these forts, is Aguada (from *Agua*, water) named after the number of fresh water springs inside. These were

the main source of drinking water for ships that reached the Mandovi estuary after a long journey across the Indian Ocean. The Aguada and the Reis Magos forts serve as prisons now, just as they did during the Portuguese rule.

Alfonso de Albuquerque captured Goa in 1510.

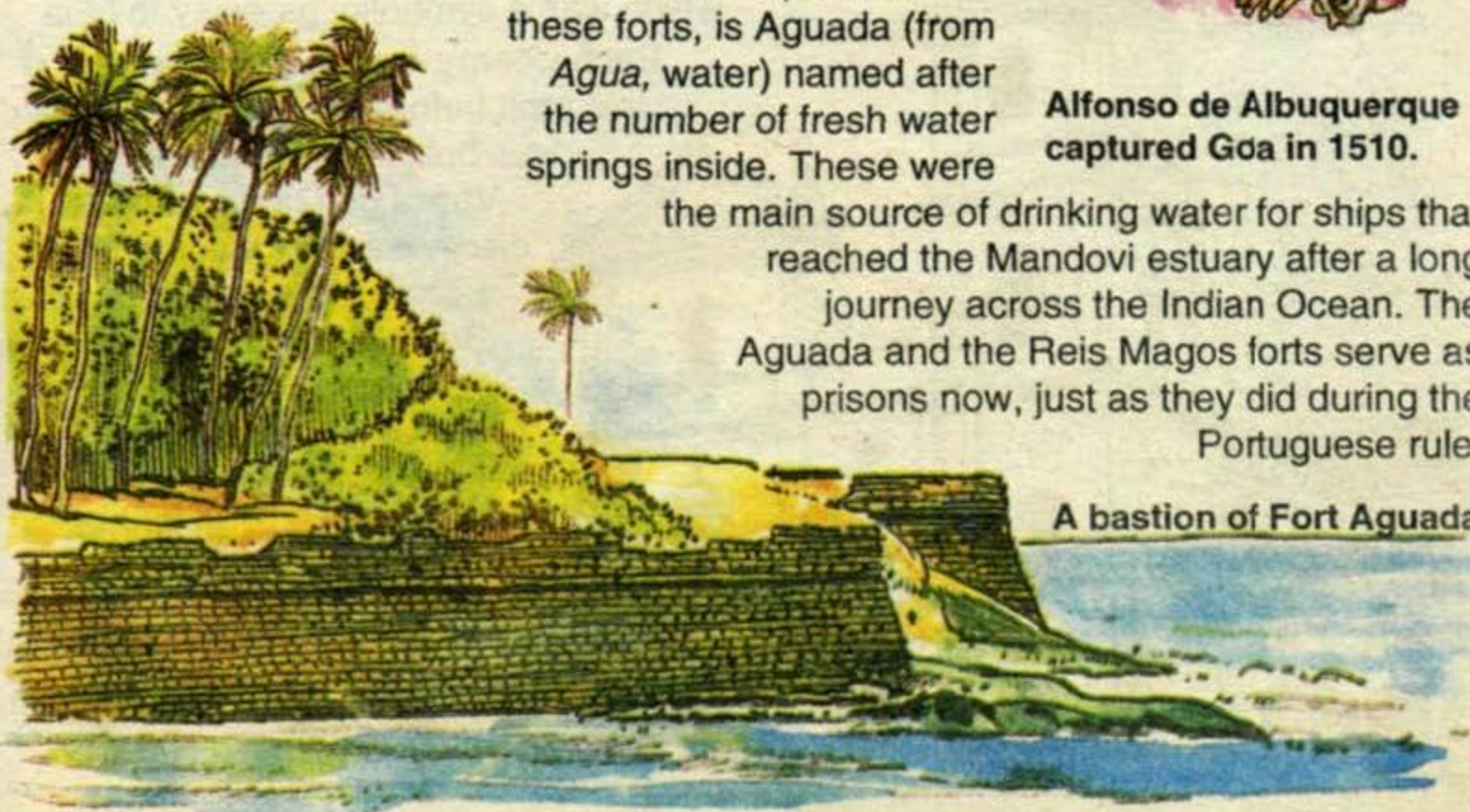
A bastion of Fort Aguada

Terekhol

Panaji

G
O
A

Polem





Land's end at Dona Paula

In between the forts lie the golden beaches, for which Goa is famous. Harmal, Chapora, Vagator, Anjuna, Baga, Calangute, Gaspar Dias and Dona Paula are the better known beaches of north Goa. The arch-shaped Calangute beach, called the 'queen of beaches', attracts the maximum number of tourists. The Dona Paula beach, to the south, is named after a viceroy's daughter, who threw herself off a cliff here, when refused permission to marry a local fisherman.

On top of a cliff at the Baga beach, to the north of Calangute, is a serene white chapel known as the Retreat House. The path leading up to the chapel has picturesque scenes depicting the 'Way of the Cross'.

Velha Goa or Old Goa about nine kilometres up river from Panaji was the capital of Goa in the 16th century. It rivalled Lisbon in grandeur in those days.

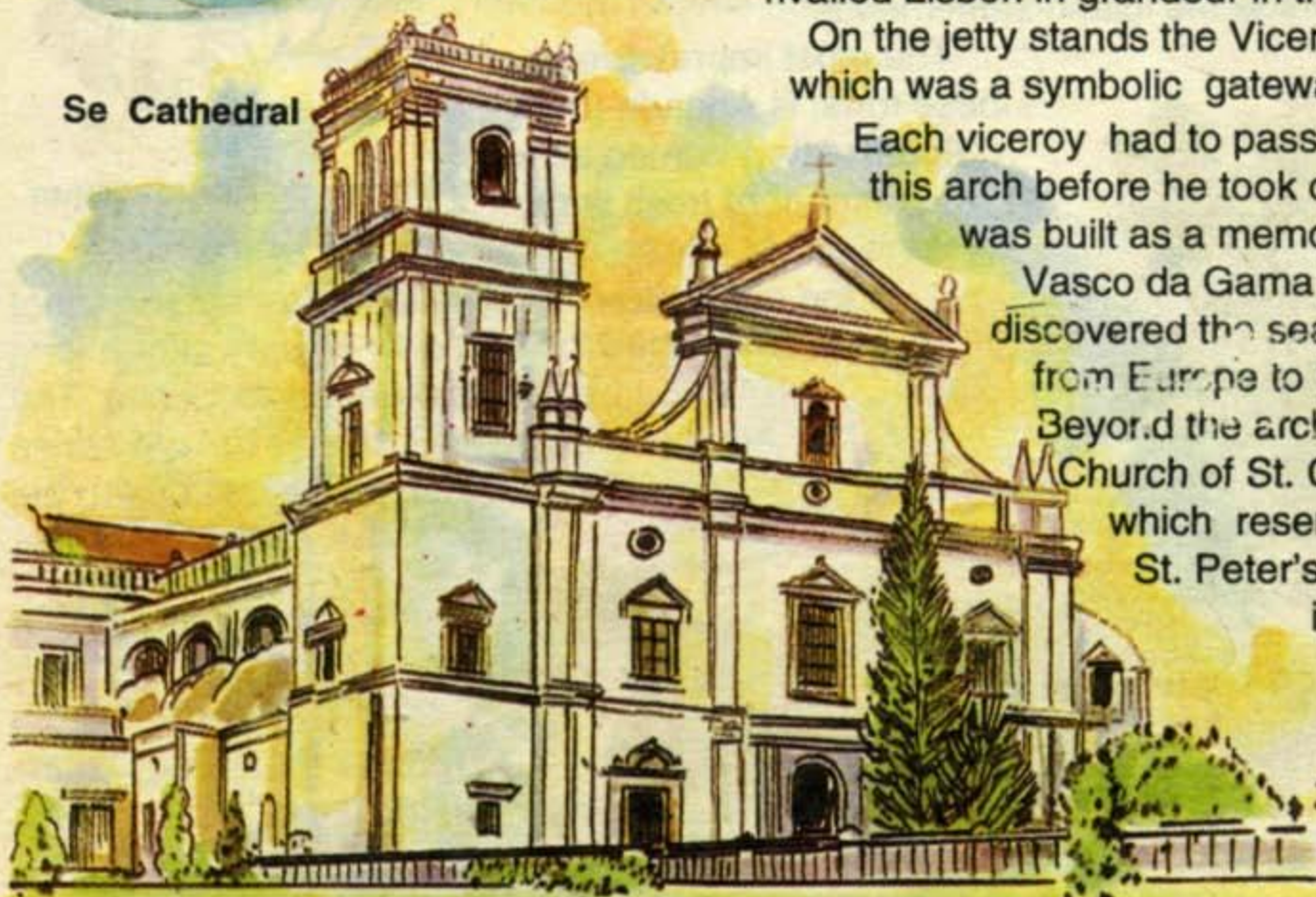
On the jetty stands the Viceroy's Arch, which was a symbolic gateway to Goa.

Each viceroy had to pass through this arch before he took office. It

was built as a memorial to Vasco da Gama who discovered the sea route from Europe to India.

Beyond the arch is the Church of St. Cajetan which resembles St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Se Cathedral



St. Francis Xavier

Opposite St. Cajetan is the Se Cathedral, one of the oldest churches and the largest in Asia. The cathedral houses the legendary "Sino do Ouro" or the "Golden Bell", famous for its mellow tone.

A little beyond is Bom Jesus Basilica also called the Church of St. Francis Xavier. It is the most important church in Goa as it houses the body of St. Francis Xavier, Goa's patron saint.

Francis Xavier was born in April 1506, in Navarre in Spain. While studying in college, he was so deeply influenced by fellow student, Ignatius Loyola, that he dedicated himself to the service of the Lord. He came to Goa on May 6th, 1542, where he preached the Christian faith in simple Portuguese and Konkani. He stayed only for a few months in Goa, for his work took him to the Coromandel coast, Sri Lanka, Malacca, the

Moluccas, Japan and finally to

China, where he died on the island of Sanchian on December 3rd, 1552. Two years later, his body was dug up and found to be in perfect condition. It was brought to Goa.

Every ten years the body, which remains uncorrupted, but has shrunk considerably, is taken in a ceremonial procession from

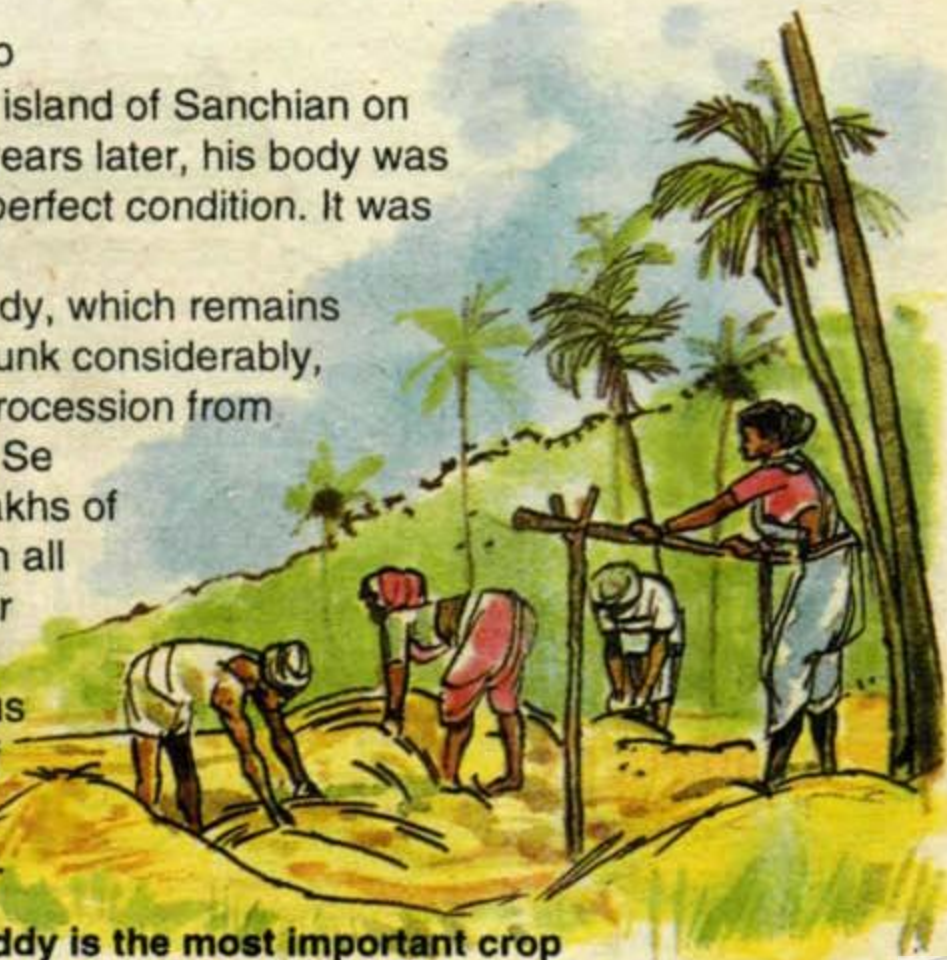
Bom Jesus to the Se Cathedral, watched by lakhs of devotees who come from all over the world to pay their respects to the saint.

On the hill opposite Bom Jesus is the Church and Convent of St. Monica, the oldest and largest nunnery in Eastern Asia.

Goa is an agricultural state. Paddy is the most important crop



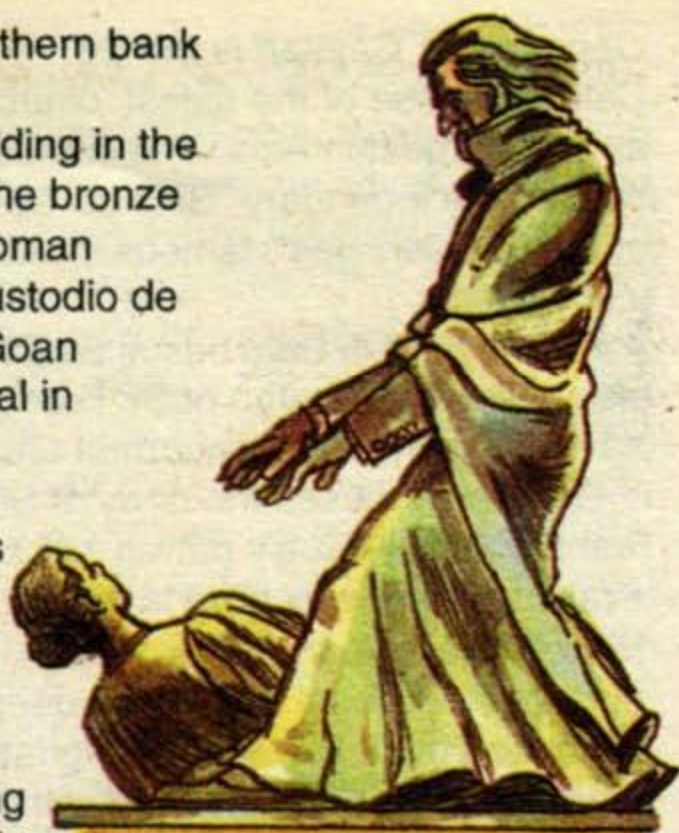
Basilica of Bom Jesus



Panaji, the capital of Goa is situated on the southern bank of the Mandovi river.

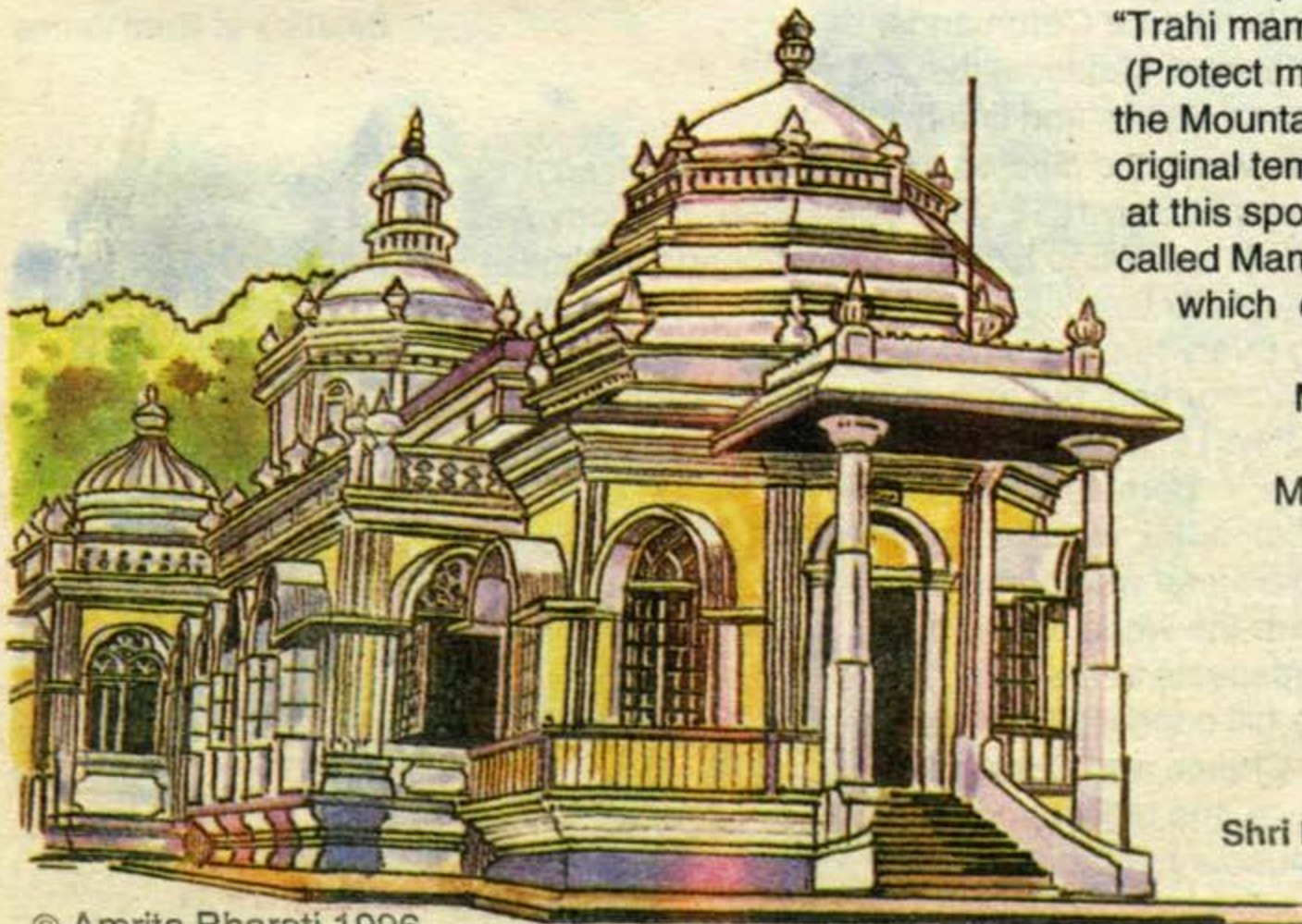
To the left of the Old Secretariat, the oldest building in the state and originally the palace of Adil Shah, is the bronze statue of Abbe Faria who is shown healing a woman through hypnosis. Abbe Faria or Father Jose Custodio de Faria to give him his full name, was a famous Goan priest-scholar-scientist, who left Goa for Portugal in his youth. He was called the 'Father of Mesmerism' and was the first to establish that hypnosis was a science of suggestion. He has been immortalised as the mad monk in the novel 'The Count of Monte Cristo' by Alexandre Dumas.

The famous Mangueshi Temple, dedicated to Shiva, is to the southeast of Panaji. According to legend, Parvati came to Goa in search of Shiva, who left Kailasa after a quarrel. As she was walking through the forests, she was confronted by a tiger.

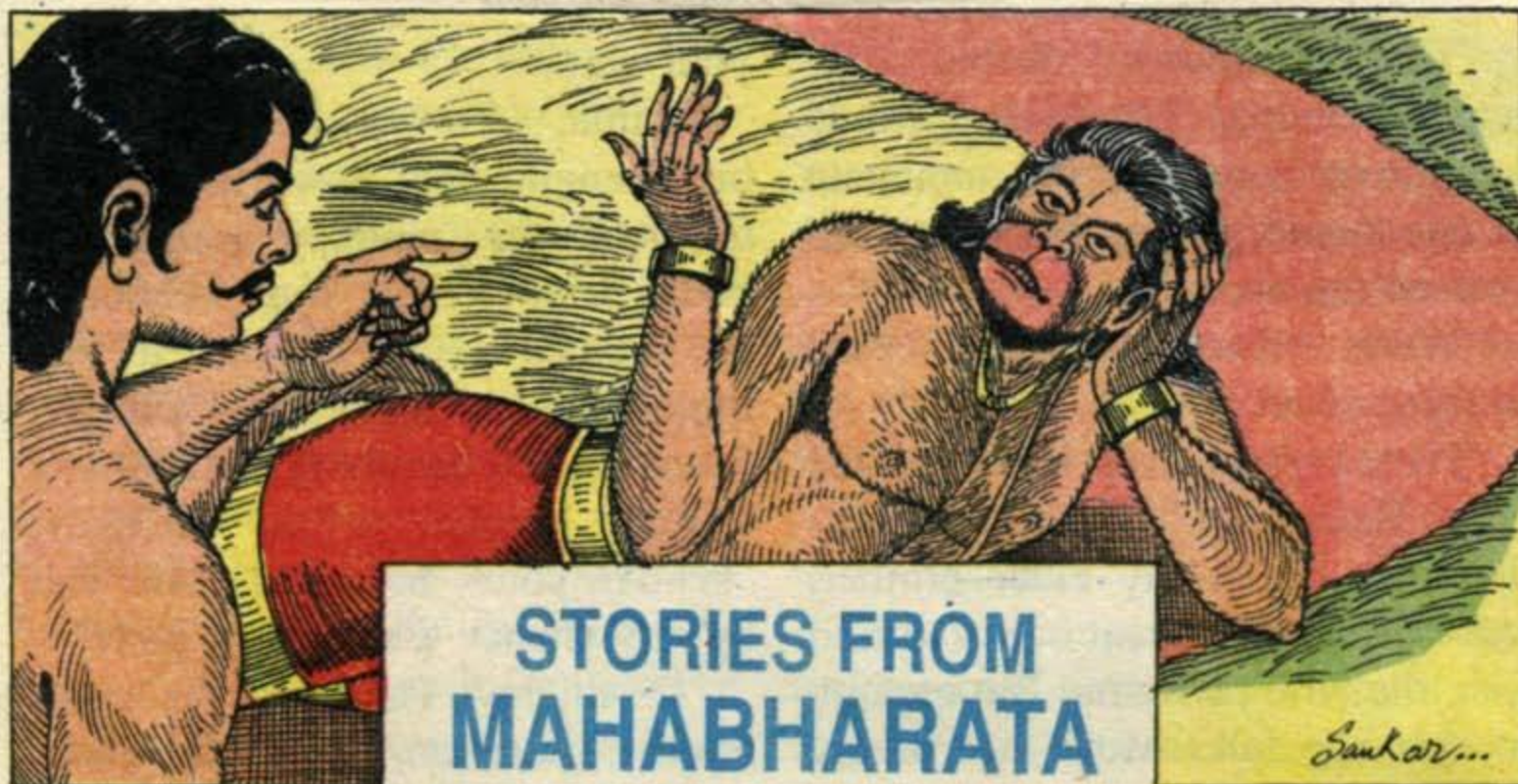


Statue of Abbe Faria

She called out to Shiva to protect her, "Trahi mam Girisha!" (Protect me, Lord of the Mountains!). The original temple stood at this spot and was called Mam Girisha, which eventually became Mangrisha and then, Mangueshi.



Shri Manguesh Temple



STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

The story so far:

The Pandava princes, with Draupadi, are forced to spend twelve years in exile. They live in a hermitage in the Kamyaka forest and are visited by sages and Sri Krishna.

The great sage Vyasa comes to console the princes, and advises Arjuna to acquire heavenly arms by penance and worship. Arjuna follows this advice, and having pleased the god Siva, obtains his blessings and the Pasupata weapon. Afterwards, Arjuna is taken to the Kingdom of the gods, to pay homage to Lord Indra.

In the meantime Bhima, to please Draupadi, goes in search of the Saugandhika flowers, and is seen by Lord Hanuman, who decides to amuse himself. He lies down across the path that Bhima would have to take and beats the ground with his great tail. Bhima, hearing the noise, hurries along the path to find out its cause.

When Bhima saw what he thought was a huge monkey blocking his way, he tried to frighten the creature off his way by shouting at him, but Hanuman just smiled and said: "Who are you? And where are you going? You cannot go any further along this path, which is the path of the gods. Please go back."

Bhima, not used to being ordered

about, grew angry and shouted: "A mere monkey telling me what to do? I'm a prince of the Kuru race, and am the son of the Wind god. Now, will you move your body out of my way?"

"I'm a very old monkey and have no strength," replied the monkey. "If you must go this way, then you'll have to jump over me."

18. BHIMA'S MEETING WITH HANUMAN

"The scriptures forbid it," retorted Bhima, "otherwise I would jump over you and the mountain in one bound, just as Hanuman had crossed the ocean."

"Who's this Hanuman?" the stranger asked.

"Haven't you ever heard of the great Hanuman?" Bhima said disdainfully. "He's my elder brother, and he crossed a great ocean to find Sita, the wife of Rama. But enough of this idle talk. Move out of my way!"

"You're so big and strong," said the monkey, very meekly, "and I'm old and tired. Will you not kindly lift me gently and then go

your way?"

Bhima, who was very proud of his strength, bent down and taking hold of the monkey round the body, tried to lift him. Although he strained every muscle, it was impossible to move the stranger. Sweating and breathing hard, Bhima looked keenly at the monkey. "Who're you?" he asked. "Are you by any chance a sage or a god?"

"O mighty Pandava, I'm your brother, Hanuman," replied the godly being, jumping to his feet. "I stopped you going along the path, for it leads to the spirit world, where the Yakshas and the Rakshasas abide. No man can enter their



sphere and remain alive. But close by is the stream where the Saugandhika plant grows."

Bhima was delighted to meet his brother again, and begged Hanuman to show him the form he took when he crossed the ocean to find mother Sita.

Hanuman smiled and began to enlarge the size of his body until he seemed to fill the entire mountain pass. His figure radiated a dazzling light. Hanuman then contracted his body to its former size and tenderly embraced Bhima.

"O hero, go back to your hermitage," he said. "Think of me whenever you're in difficulty. Fear

not the future, for when you roar on the battlefield, my voice will join yours and strike terror in the hearts of your enemies."

Hanuman bade his brother good-bye, and directed him to the stream where the Saugandhika flowers bloomed, so that he could collect armfuls of them to take them to Draupadi.

Bhima completed his mission and returned to the hermitage in the forest. But it was not long afterwards that he encountered the vile demon Jatasura.

One evening, whilst Bhima was away hunting, a Brahmin priest, who was actually Jatasura in



disguise, called at the hermitage and asked for shelter. Yudhishtira bade the man welcome, but as soon as Yudhishtira's back turned, Jatasura assumed his original fearful form and catching hold of Draupadi, tried to carry her away into the forest.

Bhima, returning from the hunt, heard Draupadi's screams. He ran towards the hermitage, and suddenly came upon Jatasura struggling to keep Draupadi under his control.

With a roar that shook the entire forest, Bhima rushed at the demon and catching him by the ankles swung him round and round and then dashed him against a rock until all his bones were broken.

It was now five years since

Arjuna had departed for the Kingdom of the gods, and one morning, as the princes sat and wondered when their brother would return, a shining chariot descended from the skies, and out stepped Arjuna, carrying wondrous gifts from Lord Indra.

There was great rejoicing at Arjuna's return to earth. For many hours, Arjuna sat with his brothers and told them about all the marvels he had seen during his stay in the Kingdom of the gods. Afterwards he showed his brothers and Draupadi the powerful weapons which had been conferred on him by Lord Siva and Indra, King of the gods.

(To continue)



A feast from a leaf

Lord Siva was once travelling on his mount, the bull Nandi. On seeing the river Baitarani, he got down. While he was taking a bath, Nandi went up to a Sehora tree nearby and touched its leaves with his head. The Lord saw this and was curious. On his return from the river, he asked Nandi why he did so. The bull told him, it was in the scriptures that if anyone were to touch a leaf of *Sehora* (in Hindi and Bengali; *Khareti* in Marathi, *Barenki* in Telugu, *Paruka* in Malayalam, and *Pirayamaram* in Tamil) with his head, he would enjoy a feast.

"So, you've started teaching me scriptures!" the Lord said mockingly. "All right, let me see whether you'll get any food at all." Siva continued on his journey and did not stop even when he saw water or grass. Nandi was tired.

All the while, Parvati was waiting for her lord. Why was he late in returning? She wondered. She lost all hope, and so began eating the food she had prepared for both of them. The next moment, he heard the hooves of Nandi. She felt ashamed. How could she now share half-eaten food? So, she took the vessel and left it where Nandi used to have his food.

Parvati received her husband, who apparently was in a bad mood. He asked her not to give any food, or grass, or water to Nandi. She led the bull to his shed and tethered him there. Nandi wondered: 'What wrong did I do to earn the lord's wrath?'

He lay down to rest when the smell of

the food left by Parvati reached him. The food meant for Siva was so delicious that for Nandi it was like a feast.

After all, the scriptures cannot go wrong!

Known in English as Siamese Rough Bush, its botanical name is *Streblus asper*. The leaves are oval shaped, with a pointed tip. Both surfaces look like sandpaper, and so is used for polishing wood and ivory. The flowers are small and greenish, and they appear from January to March. The bark is a smooth grey and stiff. It has some medicinal properties.



SAGES OF INDIA

UTANKA

One of the great sages of whom the *Mahabharata* and several other ancient books speak is Utanka.

He lived in the *ashram* of an illustrious teacher named Veda. After he had successfully completed his studies, he asked his teacher: "Can I render some service to you by way of paying my debt of gratitude to you?"

"My boy, I'm in no need of any service from you. But you can ask my wife about it. Maybe she needs something," said Sage Veda.

When Utanka offered his services

to the sage's wife, she said: "Well, I'll be pleased if you can get from the queen of King Pausa a pair of precious jewellery she puts on her ears."

Utanka called on King Pausa and requested him to let him have his wife's jewellery.

"Better you appeal to the queen herself," said the king. "She is in her room and I permit you to go and meet her."

Utanka entered the queen's apartment and was informed by her maids that she was indeed in her room. But when she entered the queen's room, he saw none. He returned to the king and told him about his inability to

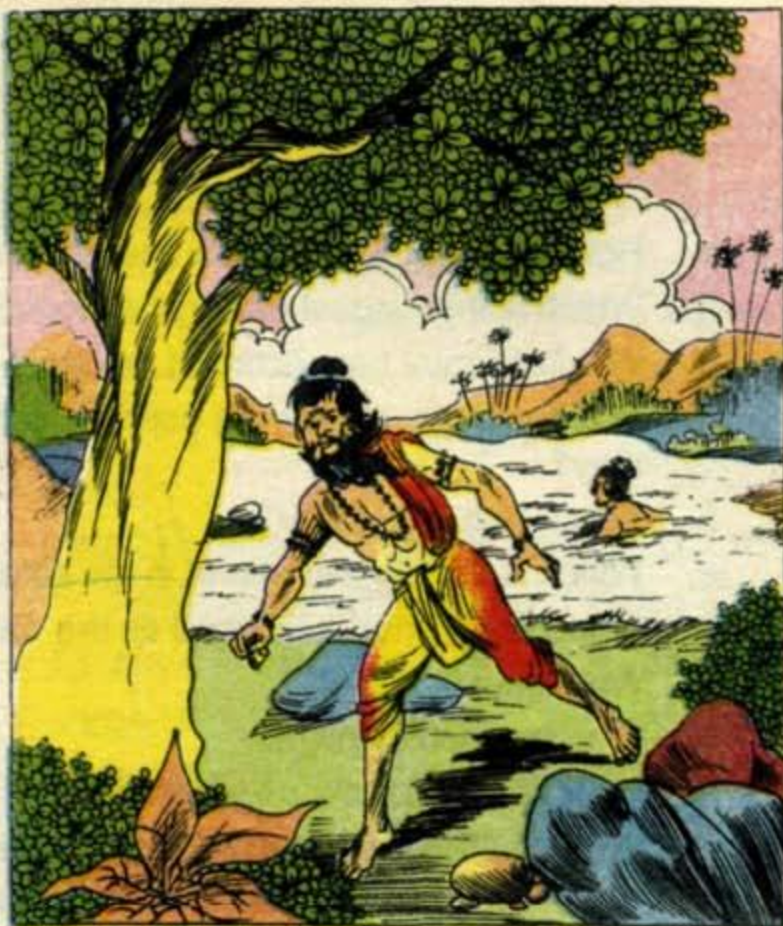


find the queen. The king thought for a moment and asked him if he had bathed early in the morning and had meditated and had eaten his food only after offering it to the gods. Alas, Utanka had not observed this discipline. The king told him to follow all those rites and then try to meet the queen. Utanka did so and the queen was visible to him. Impressed by the young man's humility, the queen gave him what he wanted.

While returning to his teacher's ashram, Utanka placed the jewellery on a slab of stone and entered a lake for a bath. Suddenly a mendicant appeared on the scene and decamped with the jewellery. Utanka pursued him. The mendicant entered a cave. To his horror, Utanka saw the mendicant changing into a serpent and disappearing into a hole.

Utanka meditated on Indra. Soon Indra's thunderbolts struck the cave and a passage opened up into the nether-world. Utanka stepped into that mysterious region and recovered the jewellery which had been taken away by none other than Vasuki, the serpent-king.

In that nether - world Utanka saw two women weaving a cloth, made of black and white threads. The weaving machine had one wheel with twelve



spokes turned by six boys. When he came back to his teacher and narrated his experiences, his teacher revealed that the black and white threads represented night and day and the wheel was the time. The twelve spokes were the twelve months and the six boys were the six seasons.

Obviously the story of Utanka is symbolic. His entering the nether world represents his diving deep into the mysteries of creation. The jewellery is perhaps a secret knowledge which is lost again and again, and must be only obtained through strenuous and courageous efforts.



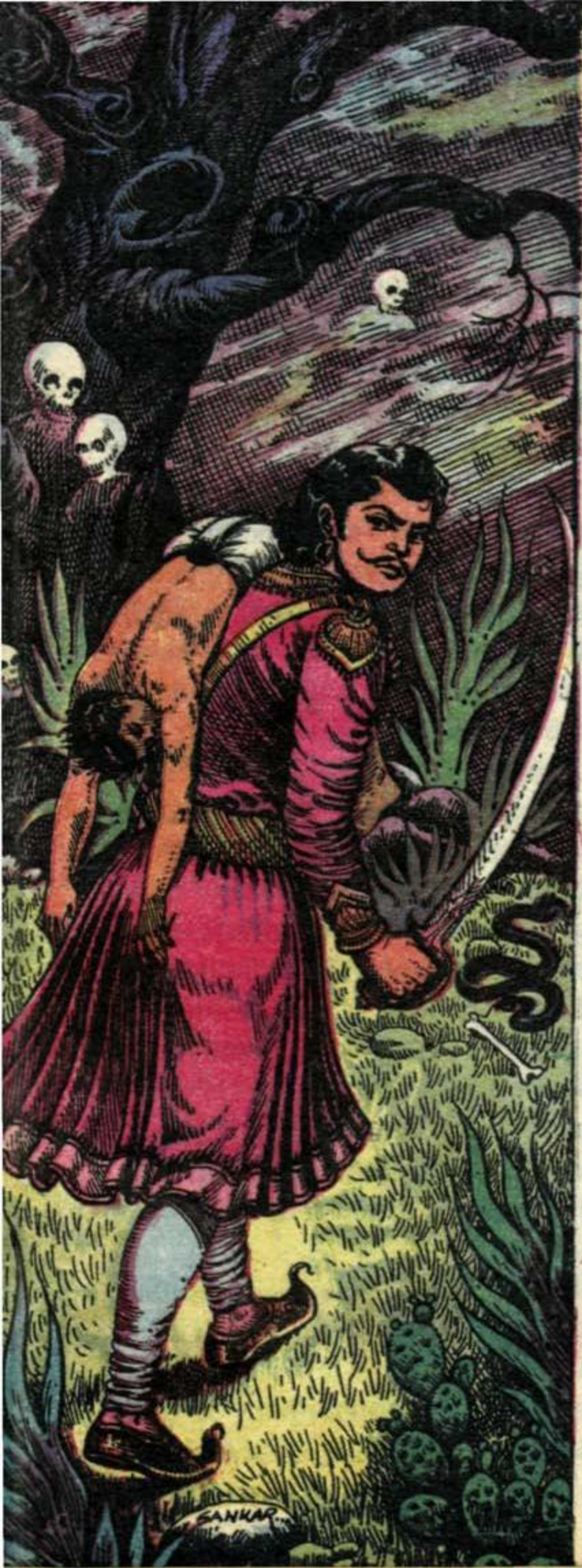
DO YOU KNOW?

1. How many squares does a chessboard have?
2. Which is the longest epic in the world?
3. Which country has recorded the most earthquakes?
4. In olden days, birds were used for carrying messages. What kind of birds were they?
5. Which bird eats stone?
6. Which is the biggest planet in the solar system?
7. A country is often described as the 'Gift of the Nile'. Which country?
8. What causes rain?
9. Who founded Jainism?
10. What is the size of one's heart?
11. What liquid metal is found in thermometers used for measuring body temperature?
12. Who was the first President of America?
13. Among oceans and seas, which three are the largest?
14. A woman was responsible for starting the profession called nursing. Name her.
15. Which vitamin is got from sunlight?
16. The residence of the head of a state is popularly known as the White House. Which state?
17. India will have General Elections soon. What is the minimum voting age in India?
18. 1996 is a leap year. How often does a leap year occur?

ANSWERS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 10. Almost the size of one's fist; | 1. 64, of which 32 are white and 32 black |
| 11. Mercury. | 2. The Mahabharata |
| 12. George Washington | 3. Japan |
| 13. The Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans | 4. Pigeons |
| 14. Florence Nightingale | 5. Ostrich. It can eat pieces of metal also. |
| 15. Vitamin D | 6. Jupiter |
| 16. The United States of America | 7. Egypt |
| 17. 18 years | 8. When the water drops in the cloud make it very heavy for the air in the atmosphere, it starts raining. |
| 18. Once in four years | 9. Vardhamana Mahavira |





New Tales of King Vikram and
the Vampire

A Promise Broken

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite, as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep in a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. Tell me, have you given your word to someone that you would do all this for a purpose? It's not so difficult to give your word to anybody, but keeping it is another matter. Everybody may not succeed easily. You'll understand this better if you were to



know what happened to Queen Ratnavati. Listen to her story." The vampire then began his narration.

The kingdom of Rajpura was once ruled by King Rajvarma. Ratnavati was his queen. Even when she was a little princess, she was a playmate of Prince Rajvarma, and his mother, the Queen of Rajpura, had decided that the two would make an ideal couple when they grew up. They also loved each other, and when they reached marriageable age, the queen openly began expressing her desire that her son married Ratnavati. The princess also had all along cherished a desire to wed none other than Rajvarma. He

had by then grown to be a handsome young man, proud and strong. Ratnavati, however, at that time was rather lean and in comparison to Rajvarma, lacked in good looks. She was aware of this, and so hesitated to speak out her desire.

But her maids-in-waiting heard that Prince Rajvarma had been chosen to wed her. They took the news to her, but cautioned her: "O Princess! Prince Rajvarma may agree to marry you to satisfy his mother. How're you certain that he may not long for a more beautiful girl as his wife, if he were to come across one?"

The warning had its effect on Ratnavati, who then decided to keep her desire to herself and not disclose it to her father and mother, or even Rajvarma if ever they chanced to meet each other. One day, they did meet as she was returning from worshipping at the Devi temple. Suddenly, she took courage in telling him: "O Prince! You're really handsome and should have an equally charming girl as your wife. I don't think I deserve that position."

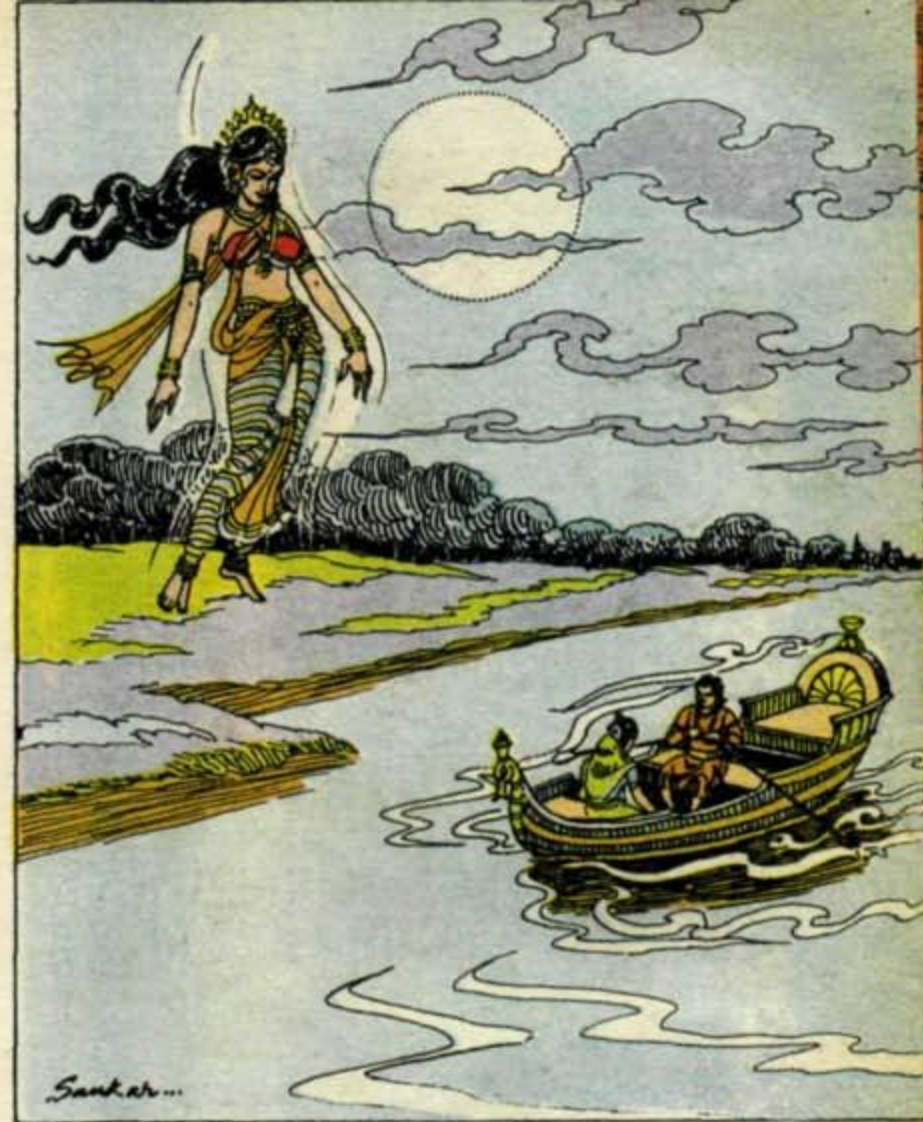
Rajvarma merely laughed. "Ratna! Why should you worry about all these things? I've already taken a decision and that is, I won't marry anyone other than you! You would be my

queen, and none else. I give you my word."

Ratnavati's joy knew no bounds. She coyly bent her head to avoid his face. She merely nodded. Anyway, their wedding took place with great pomp and splendour. Soon, Rajvarma ascended the throne and Ratnavati became the Queen of Rajpura. People looked at them as an ideal couple. They had everything to lead a joyous life, but what saddened them was the fact no child was born to them for a long time.

On a full moon night, they were rowing a boat along the river that skirted the kingdom. Just then, an enchantress from heaven was descending on the earth. Chandrakanta happened to see the royal couple. She was a beauty queen who went about bragging that there was none in paradise so handsome as to deserve her hand in marriage. She had told everybody that she might find a match for herself on the earth.

When she saw King Rajvarma, she was immediately struck by his beauty. He had a perfect figure and was extremely handsome. She desired to marry him. Without attracting their attention, she was able to listen to the conversation between Rajvarma and Ratnavati. She heard them



grieving over the fact that they did not have any children. She went back to her heavenly abode.

Next day, Chandrakanta once again descended on the earth. Fortunately for her, Rajvarma was at that time alone in the garden. She approached him from behind and suddenly stood in front of him. "I'm a beauty queen from heaven," she introduced herself. "I'm of marriageable age, but there's nobody in heaven so handsome as can marry me. I was roaming on the earth when I happened to see you yesterday in a boat. I like you very much, and I feel you're a perfect match for me. I wish you married me."





Rajvarma, too, was attracted by her beauty and charm, but he rejected her proposal. Chandrakanta did not despair. She straight away went to Ratnavati, who was alone at that time. "Ratna! I requested Rajvarma to marry me, but he's not agreeing to take me as his wife. What a handsome man he is! There's nobody like him in heaven from where I come. I find he likes only you. All right tell me, have you both been able to fondle a baby of your own, even after a long married life?"

Queen Ratnavati was very much upset as she listened to all this. But she kept her cool. "What you say is all true,

but what can I do to change all that?"

Chandrakanta once again revealed her mind and repeated her desire. "You should not be selfish in your happiness, Ratna. You must ensure that your husband, too, is equally happy. If you care for his happiness, you must allow him to marry me. A child will be born to us within a year. He'll be happy and he can continue to stay with me. And he won't forsake you either. Now, if you were to think of only your happiness, all this won't happen. Give it a thought."

Ratnavati thought for a while and then said: "All right, I'm agreeable to your proposal. However, you must give me one more year's time. If I won't bear a child by then, you can have Rajvarma as your husband. I give you my word."

Chandrakanta accepted the deal. She went back to heaven. Next day, Ratnavati worshipped at the Devi temple. While she was returning to the palace, a *sanyasi* sitting in a secluded corner in the temple precincts accosted her. "You're sad because you don't have a child, aren't you? I can see that sorrow casting a shadow on your face. Show me your hand."

Ratnavati extended her left hand. The *sanyasi* examined the lines on her palm for a long time. "I can't see



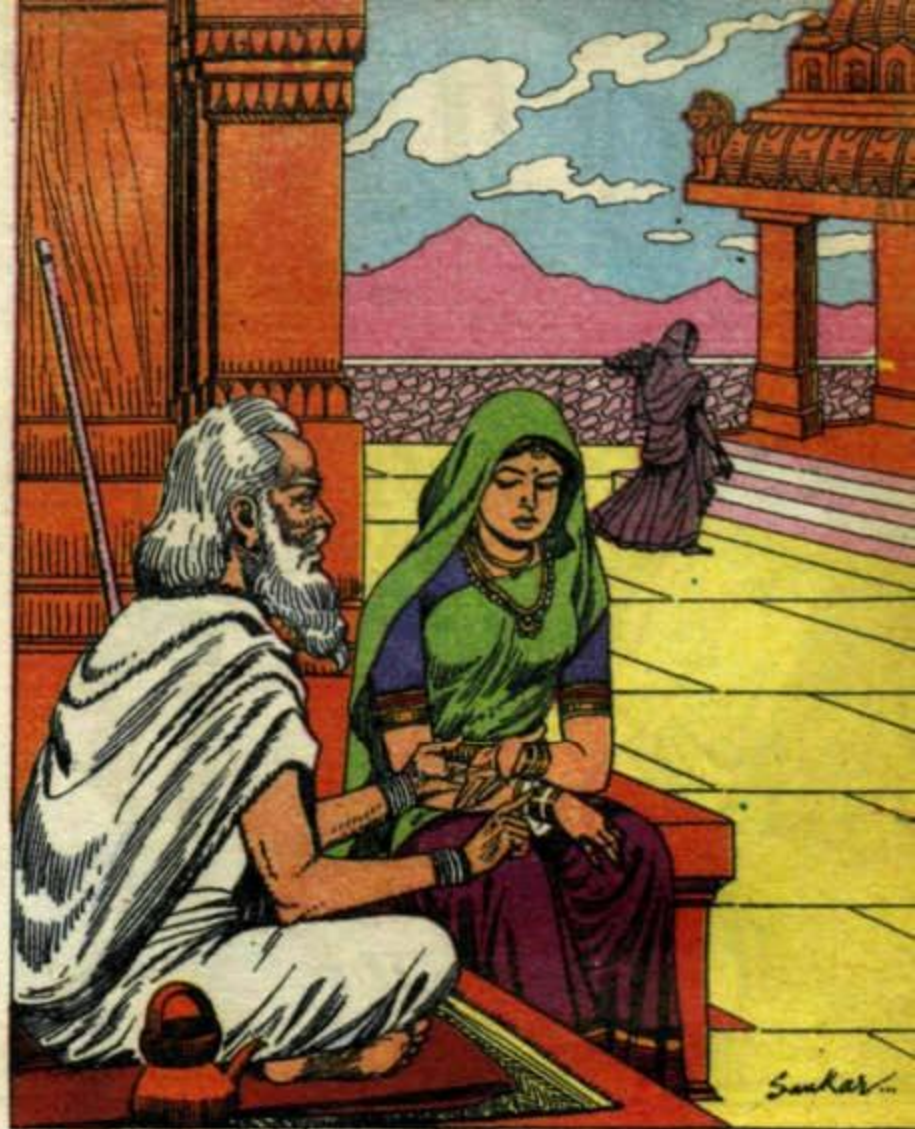
any indication that you'll bear a child. However, your future will be bright." He paused for a while and then added, "Anyhow, can you do something?"

The queen asked anxiously, "Tell me, O revered sage, what do you want me to do?"

"Far away in the north is situated the Mandhara mountain," said the sanyasi. "There is a bridle-path leading to the mountain. If you take that, you can cross over to the other side. There you'll find the *ashram* of Sivadasa. You and your husband must visit him and tell him you've been sent by me Shringa. He'll give you proper advice."

"I shall do as you direct, O sage!" said Ratnavati. She prostrated before him and returned to the palace. She went straight to Rajvarma and told him all that had happened. "Let's try this as a last resort, my lord. Maybe by the blessings of the sage, we'll have children. I'm sure you don't have any objection."

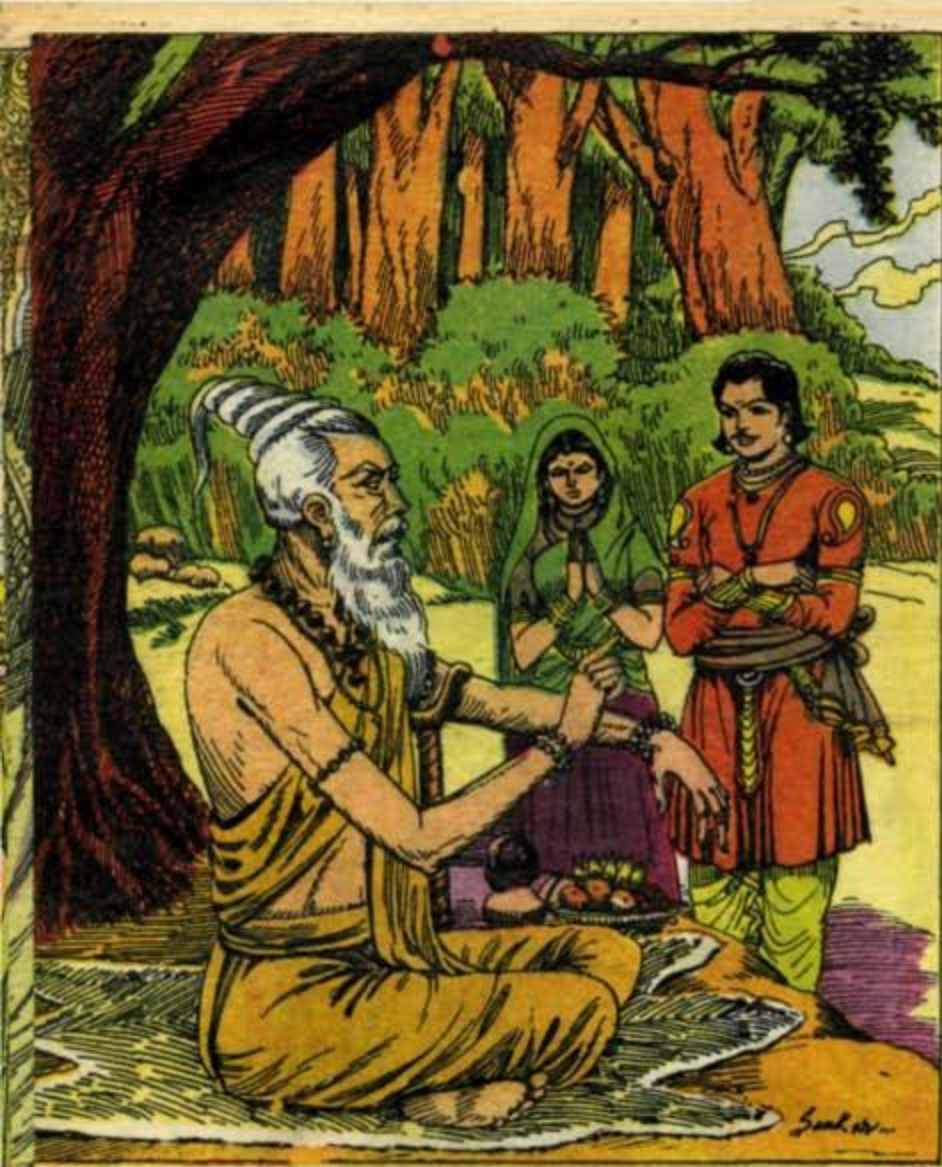
Ratnavati was sure that her husband would not object. Yet she wanted to take his approval. "Dear, we're husband and wife. We share our joys and sorrows in equal measure. Neither of us craves for happiness alone. We've never been like that till now. Why should there be any change now?" Rajvarma reassured her.



Ratnavati was happy that her husband had approved of her latest venture. One morning, they both left for the Manthara mountain, where an opening took them to the other side. Soon, they could see the ashram of sage Sivadasa. They saw him outside sitting beneath the shade of a tree. They prostrated before him and conveyed to him the message from sage Shringa.

After welcoming them with kind words, the sage asked Rajvarma to show him his right palm. The sage looked at it for some time and said, "There's no indication in your lines also that you'll have children, unless





some miracles happen."

Miracle? What kind of miracle? When? How? wondered both Ratnavati and Rajvarma. "Can we do something for that miracle to happen?" asked Rajvarma, eagerly.

"Walk from here towards the north," explained the sage, "and you'll come upon a Siva temple. In front of it is a huge tree, laden with broad branches. The tree has some mystic powers. It brings forth a fruit only one day in the year, and that too only one fruit. If anyone were to eat it, whatever he or she wishes for will be fulfilled. But the fruit should not be plucked but caught on a piece of cloth

and not allowed to fall on the ground. You can stand beneath the tree spreading your shawl in your hands; and you, lady, you may try to catch it on the end of your sari. And while you wait for the fruit to fall down, you must keep on chanting the Lord's name with piety and devotion, and not think of anything else. Fortunately for you, today is an auspicious day and the tree can be expected to bear the fruit. Ensure that it doesn't fall on the ground. If you pick it up and eat it, you won't get any benefit from it. Remember that!"

"What I wish for is a child, O most respected swami!" cried Ratnavati. "How I wish I became a mother!"

"Only the power above can decide all these things," remarked the sage. "His will be done!" At that moment, there was an aura around the sage's face.

Ratnavati and Rajvarma took leave of sage Sivadasa and walked northwards. They reached the Siva temple before dusk. Rajvarma took off his shawl and spread it around his arms. Ratnavati pulled off one end of her sari and held it in front of her. For sometime they meditated on Lord Siva and then began chanting His name, softly. They anxiously awaited the auspicious moment for the tree to bear fruit and

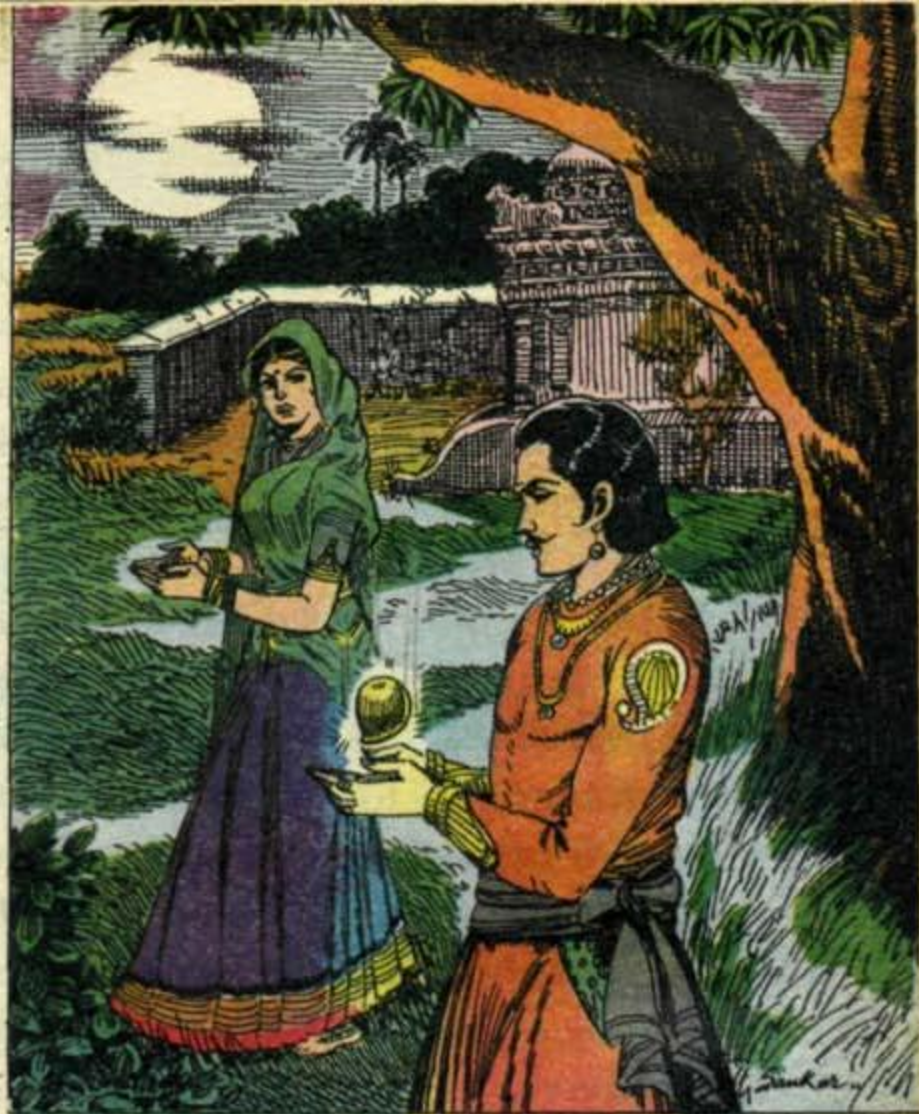


for the fruit to fall down.

The moon went up in the sky. They heard the rustling of leaves. They saw a tiny branch at the end of a long branch swaying. They could see a ripe fruit among the leaves on the branch. Suddenly, it let go the branch and fell down—and fell into the sari end in Ratnavati's hands. She was surprised and at the same overcome by joy. She shared the fruit with her husband and then asked him, "What were you wishing for when the fruit fell down?"

"Ratna, whatever we wish for must be something possible for us to get fairly and justly," explained Rajvarma. "We've been told that we're not fated to get a child. Therefore, it's not fair on our part to wish for a child by any other means. And what is unfair should not have been wished for. A husband and wife can have children only as a natural gift. Any other birth would fail the test of truth and righteousness. We may remain childless, but our future should be bright. In fact, that was what I wished for—happiness and peace. You should not worry any more."

Ratnavati felt consoled by her husband's assurances. She was happy that Rajvarma was not only handsome but full of wisdom. Both of them were satisfied about their experience



and returned to the palace.

Chandrakanta was all the while biding her time. At the end of one year as asked for by Ratnavati, she came down from heaven once again and went to Ratnavati. "You must forgive me, Kanta," said Ratnavati. "I could not bear a child, nor could I become a mother. And I'm not able to keep my word to you. I tried to persuade my husband to take another wife, but he does not wish to marry any other woman. However much I may try, he will not agree. That's certain, Kanta." She then narrated to her all that had happened in that one year.

Chandrakanta listened to her in-

terestedly. A smile came on her lips. "Ratna, you're very fortunate," she complimented her. "You'll soon have a child!" She blessed her and disappeared. Ratnavati hurried to Rajvarma and told him of her meeting with Chandrakanta. Soon she gave birth to a child. Their joy knew no bounds.

The vampire ended his narration with that and turned to King Vikramaditya. "O King! Ratnavati had given a promise to Chandrakanta, but she did not keep that promise. Two sages had pronounced that Ratnavati would not bear a child, yet she became a mother. How will you justify the two events? If you don't give me a satisfying answer, you know what'll happen? Your head will be blown to a thousand pieces!"

Vikramaditya did not have to think for long to find answers to the vampire's posers. "For the sake of her own happiness, Ratnavati did not object to her

husband taking another wife. She and Rajvarma were not fated to have children. If that be so, it would have been unjust and unfair if they had gone against their principles. This feeling prompted them to remain wedded to each other and be contented and happy. If Rajvarma had taken another woman, he knew well that Ratnavati would have been unhappy though she would not have expressed it because of her promise to Chandrakanta. So, he had reconciled himself to his fate of remaining childless. Both their attitudes to life evoked admiration in Chandrakanta who, being a member of the heavenly world, was competent to bless Ratnavati."

The vampire realised that Vikramaditya had outwitted him once again. He flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse with him. The king drew his sword and went after the vampire.



IN KING SUDARSANA'S PRESENCE...



OH, KING! YOUR WISH HAS COME TRUE, I'VE MADE YOUR SONS WORLDLY WISE.

TELL YOUR FATHER WHAT YOU'VE UNDERSTOOD FROM 'MITRABHEDA' THE FIRST PART OF PANCHATANTRA.



'MITRABHEDA', THE FIRST TANTRA, TELLS US HOW A KING WAS RUINED BY PAYING HEED TO TWO GREEDY AND SCHEMING COUNSELLORS...

...KARATAKA AND DAMANAKA...



...BROKE THE FRIENDSHIP OF PINGALAKA THE LION AND SANJIVAKA THE BULL, FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT.



SO, YOU MAY USE THIS WEAPON IN DIVIDING YOUR ENEMIES AND VANQUISHING THEM...



...BUT YOU MUST NOT FALL INTO THE SAME TRAP. NOW TELL ME ABOUT THE SECOND PART.

YES SIR

THE SECOND TANTRA IS 'MITRABHEDA'. IT ILLUSTRATES HOW FOUR WISE FRIENDS, LAGHUPATANAKA, MANTHARA, HIRANYAKA AND CHITRANGA...



... OVERCAME ALL DIFFICULTIES BY STANDING TOGETHER THOUGH THEIR MEANS WERE LIMITED.

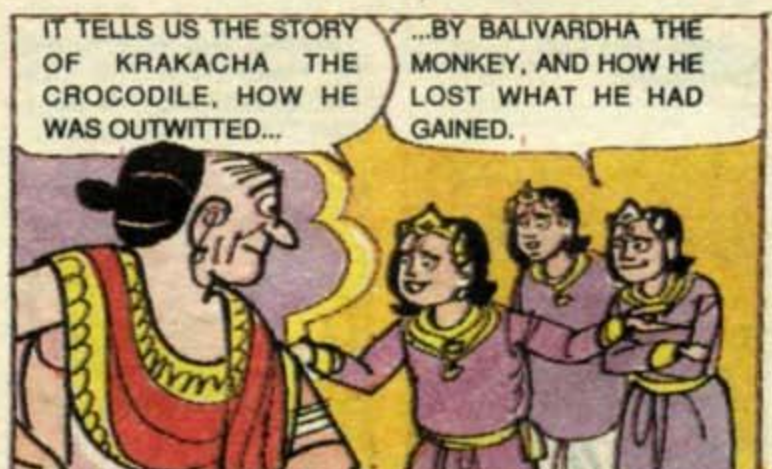
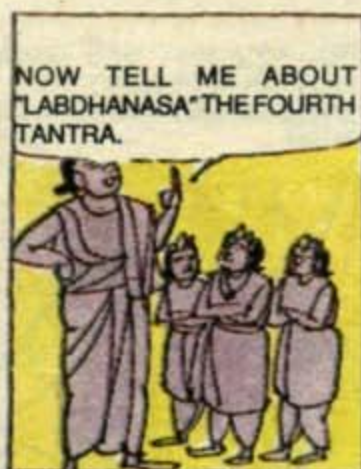


STAND UNITED ALWAYS. NEVER FALL OUT WITH FRIENDS. NO DANGER WILL BEFALL YOU.

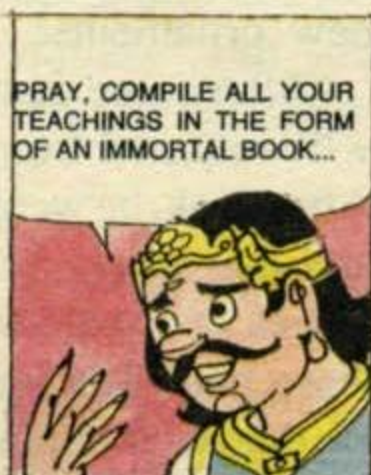


He does not suffer sorrow in sorrow, who does not look for pleasure in pleasure.

-Thirukkural



The touchstone of perfection is to receive a defeat even at the hands of one's inferiors.



Those who fear guilt, if they commit a fault even as small as a millet seed, will consider it to be as large as a palmyrah tree.



A CLEVERER THIEF

Long, long ago, there lived Nagappa and Rajappa, who were thick friends. Rajappa was of charitable disposition and generously gave to the needy. Nagappa, on the other hand, was a miser. Rajappa, unfortunately, was not blessed with children, so he wished to go on a pilgrimage, for which he had saved two hundred silver coins. He decided to carry a hundred coins to meet the expenses on the way, and to keep the other hundred coins safe somewhere.

Could he entrust the money with somebody? He sought his friend's advice. "No, don't ask me to keep it for you," said Nagappa. "I might spend it and, when you come back and ask for it, how will I return it?" He then posed as if he was thinking of a solution. "Well, I've a suggestion. You've seen that huge banyan tree near the temple? You dig a pit beneath the tree and bury the money in it. Keep some-

thing to identify the spot, so that when you come back, you can easily dig out the coins."

The next morning, Rajappa and his wife left on their pilgrimage. The previous night, he had as advised by his friend buried the hundred coins beneath the banyan. Nagappa impatiently waited till night and then went and dug out the coins. Before long, his wife was going about wearing new ornaments!

After some days, Rajappa and his wife returned from their pilgrimage. After dusk, he went to the banyan tree and dug where he had placed some stones in a pattern. The stones were there, but not the hundred silver coins! He dug at other places also below the tree; he could not find the coins anywhere. No doubt, someone had cleverly removed the coins from where he had kept them. Who else would have taken them than Nagappa? he con-

cluded. However, he did not question Nagappa, but went and reported the matter to the Village chief. "Rajappa, do as I tell you." And he gave some instructions to Rajappa.

Accordingly, he went to Nagappa. "How're you, my friend? Is everybody in your family all right? I've been wanting to meet you from the moment I came back. I missed you very much all these days."

"Oh, we're all right," replied Nagappa. "How're you, Rajappa? How was your trip?"

"Everything went all right at every place we visited," said Rajappa, and he added coolly, "Fortune seems to have favoured me all through and I've come to possess nearly a thousand coins. And I'm wondering where I shall keep them safe. If you'll so advise, I shall bury them beneath the banyan. What do you say? But you must come along with me and show me a good spot."

"Of course, I shall go with you," agreed Nagappa. "When do you want to go?"

"We shall go there after dusk," said Rajappa. "In fact, I feel like going on another pilgrimage soon."

Somehow, Nagappa's heart was beating fast during their meeting. Would Rajappa have already gone



and checked whether his hundred coins were safe? Would he have found out that they were missing from the pit? And when he missed the coins, would Rajappa have suspected him? He thought he should take his wife's advice.

Nagamam was the least perturbed. In fact, she had a ready solution to the problem. "We shall remove those thousand coins also!" she said. "You take my ornaments to the pawnbroker. They can fetch us four hundred coins, but take only a hundred and bury them at the same place from where you had taken them. So, when you both go there, the coins would be





in the pit, and your friend will feel confident and place the thousand coins also in the same pit. And after he goes away on a pilgrimage again, you can take all the one thousand one hundred coins."

Nagappa liked his wife's suggestion. He pawned her ornaments for a hundred coins. He waited for dusk to set in to go to the banyan tree and bury the coins. He then hurried back home. Rajappa had expected that something like this might happen, and so he was keeping a careful watch near the banyan tree. He was thus witness to Nagappa's movements. The moment he went away, Rajappa retrieved the hundred coins and went home.

The next day and the next, Nagappa waited for Rajappa to go to the ban-

yan tree. But he did not turn up. Nagappa was impatient. He himself went to Rajappa. "Why didn't you come to bury the coins? It's not advisable to keep so much money in the house."

"You know what happened?" said Rajappa, casually. "The Village chief wanted a loan and I gave the money to him. After all, till I go again, I can manage with the hundred coins that I had buried beneath the banyan. When I get back the money from the Village chief, we shall go to bury them."

Nagappa almost swooned. He somehow or other managed to reach home to tell his wife what he heard from Rajappa. "Oh! What will happen to my ornaments now!!" she wailed.

- To those whose minds are full of evil, happiness is difficult even in a dream.
- In 'avidya', the ideas in the mind are always conflicting.

SPORTS SNIPPETS

World Cup and World Records

India on top

That does not mean India won the World Cup this year! Fortune favoured Sri Lanka which beat Australia in the final played at Lahore on March 17; earlier, the semi-final at Calcutta on March 13 against India was abandoned because of an unruly crowd and the match was given to Sri Lanka. India, however, had the consolation that two of their players were placed at the top for aggregates in both batting and bowling. Sachin Tendulkar scored a total of 523 runs in 7 matches, including 2 centuries. His highest was 137. Anil Kumble took 15 wickets, delivering 418 balls in 7 matches. The Calcutta-based MODE Research conducted a survey among cricket fans in Madras, Bangalore, Bombay, Calcutta, and Delhi. They gave the maximum points to Sachin Tendulkar in batting, bowling, and fielding.

Spell broken

In all the five earlier World Cup tournaments, the final victors had batted first. In the Sixth World Cup Final at Lahore, this spell was broken. Sri Lanka won the toss, but sent in Australia to bat first. It was also the first time the World Cup was being annexed by the host country – Sri Lanka – which had India and Pakistan as co-hosts.

Most valuable

After the final on March 17, Sanath Jayasuriya, of Sri Lanka, was declared Man of the Tournament, for his all-around

performance. Earlier, he was Man of the Match at Delhi (vs. India) on March 2 and at Faislabad, in Pakistan, (vs. England) on March 9. Captain Arjuna Ranatunga called him "our most consistent player".



He was the "Most Valuable Player" for Sri Lanka, which earned him a gleaming 'Audi 4' automobile. He has mastered the art of sending the ball high across the 30-yard circle, besides being a versatile off-spinner, and one of the best fielders of the day.

Records

- *Participation* : Teams from 12 countries for the first time.
- *Highest total* : 398 for 5 by Sri Lanka against Kenya on March 6 at Kandy, Sri Lanka.
- *Highest individual innings* : 188 by Gary Kirsten of S. Africa against UAE at Rawalpindi on February 16.
- *Largest number of centuries* : 15 from 11 players.
- *Oldest Captain* : Steven Lubbers (42) of Holland.
- *No extras* : South Africa's 178 against New Zealand did not include a single extra.
- *Ticket price* : Rs12,500 for a seat in the air-conditioned lounge at Mohali (Chandigarh) for the Semi-final on March 14 between Australia and West Indies.





Antidote for Animosity

Ratnasen was the ruler of Ratnapuri. He loved hunting. He would go a - hunting at least once a week. Most of the times he would be accompanied by a large entourage.

One day he led his men into the forest. Their enthusiasm prompted him to hunt for a long time. He then decided to rest his people and take a rest himself. He lay down beneath the shade of a tall tree. He did not close his eyes, but he thought he heard a rustle in the bushes behind him. He turned to see what it was, when he saw a tiger advancing towards him, eyes steady, and ready to pounce on him any moment.

It did pounce on him, but he grabbed his shield and with it he managed to push back the ferocious animal, which sprang up to pounce on him a second time. Ratnasen drew his sword and struck it at the neck with such force that the tiger fell back with a growl. The next moment it lay dead.

By then, his men had rushed to his aid. They gathered round him and began praising him for his daring and valour. When their cheering died down, the king heard some movement among the bushes. Suddenly he became alert, but before he reached the bush, out jumped a tiger cub hardly a month old. The cub seemed to have smelt its mother, though it lay motionless. It went near the body and circled round a few times expecting its mother to get up and fondle it.

Ratnasen took pity on the cub, and took it in his arms and stroked its back. It purred like a cat and licked his fingers. "Don't be angry with me," he told the tiger cub, apologetically, "I had to kill your mother for protecting my life. Don't worry, I shall take care of you." He then called it a day and returned to the palace carrying the cub himself. At the palace, he showed it to the queen, who did not

quite like the idea of keeping a tiger cub in the palace. "After all it's a tiger cub. We may feed him with milk and fruits but it won't forget his natural habits and instinct. Who knows it may not turn against us when it grows? Better we think twice about keeping it in the palace."

Of course, Ratnasen could not fully agree to the queen's argument and warning. He could not shake off the sight in the forest – how the cub circled round its mother crying for its love and affection. "I had to slay its mother and I regretted my act when I saw the cub yearning for its mother. It would have cried itself to death, that's why I brought it here. It's quite young and if we take care of it from now, it may remain harmless. If, however, it turns ferocious, we may take it back to the forest."

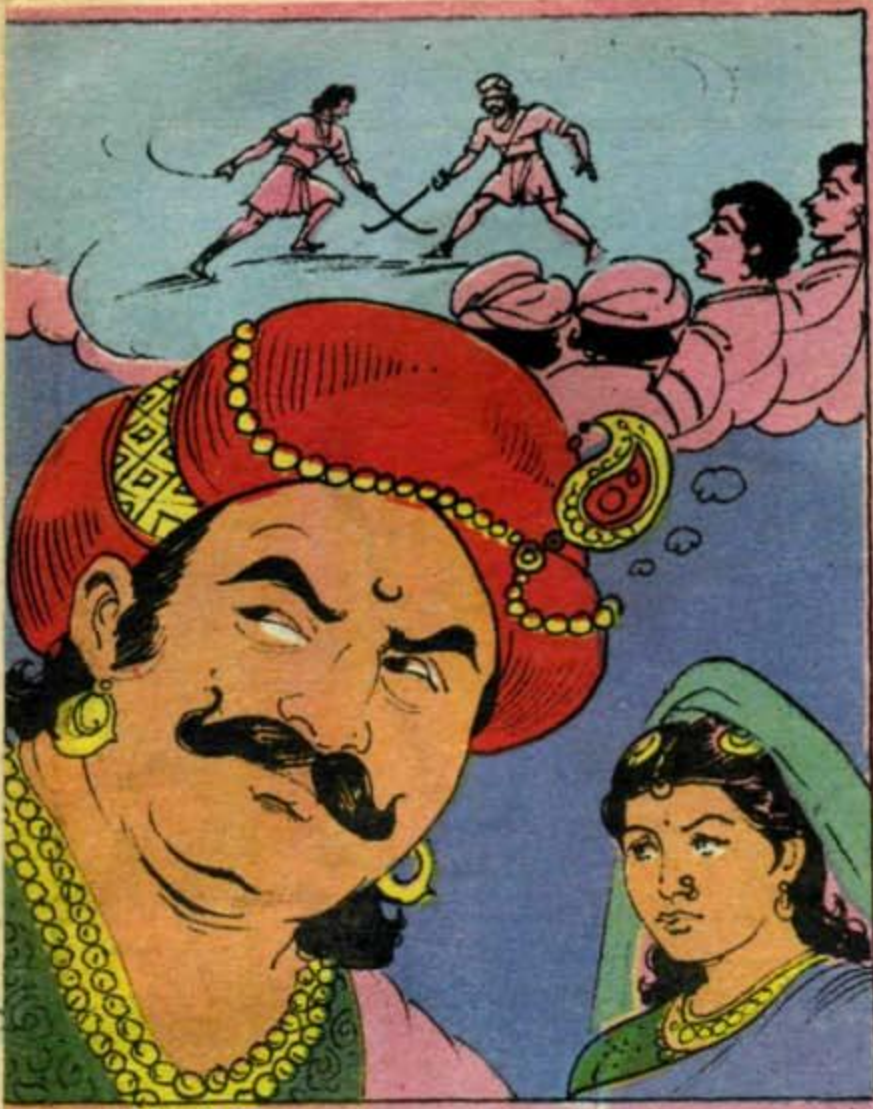
The king thus decided to rear the cub in the palace itself. He himself fed it with milk three times a day. One month went by, and the cub grew up healthy. It roamed the palace without any hindrance from anyone. Everybody fondled it like a kitten. Its favourite hour was when it slept on the lap of the queen.

Soon a whole year passed. The cub was now a full-size tiger, but it did not harm anyone. It behaved like a domes-



icated big cat. Suddenly, it fell ill and began groaning. It was found that there was some swelling on its back, which soon developed into a huge boil. The king was very upset as he listened to its cries. He sent for a physician who was an expert in treating animals. He examined the tiger. "Your majesty! This is a rare disease, but it can be cured. Twelve different herbs have to be dried in the sun, powdered, then made into a paste, and applied on the boil. I have eleven of the herbs with me. The twelfth one is actually a flower that blossoms once a year. And I've seen it growing only in one place – in the royal garden of Manikyasen of Mangalpuri."





The mere mention of Manikyasen's name made Ratnasen's face flush with anger and hatred. There was a cause for such a reaction. It had happened some twenty years ago. Princess Kanchana of Kanakapuri was to choose a husband for herself, and several eligible princes had been invited to the *swayamvara*. Ratnasen was quite young then, and he, too, went to attend the grand ceremony. He was sitting next to Manikyasen.

The princess approached the suitors. A maid introduced every one of them. After Manikyasen was introduced to her, Kanchana tarried in front of him for a while and put the

garland she was carrying on him. Manikyasen looked around, full of pride and a bit of arrogance. His eyes fell on Ratnasen. He twirled his moustache as though he had defeated him in a fight.

Ratnasen could not brook this insult. "You small - minded fellow!" he shouted at Manikyasen. "Just because a girl has put a garland around your neck, you haven't become a hero. You must show your valour by fighting men. Come on! I'm game for a fight!"

Manikyasen accepted the challenge. "I'm ready for a fight," he said, "but why stop with a mere sword-fight? You are well aware that our kingdoms have a dispute over that fort situated on our borders. So, let's decide this way. If I were to win, then the fort will be ceded to my kingdom. And if you win, you can keep the fort for ever. Do you agree?"

Ratnasen accepted the condition. The hall where the *swayamvara* took place was soon converted into an arena. Ratnasen was confident that no one was a match to him in sword-fight. The royal household of Kanakapuri, including Kanchana, and the princes who had come for the *swayamvara* were all seated around.

Ratnasen fought with great force and Manikyasen found it difficult to

defend himself. He was soon tired and it looked as though he would have to concede defeat. Ratnasen noticed his adversary's predicament and took advantage of a weak moment to deal a severe blow on Manikyasen. However, Manikyasen managed to evade the sword, which hit Ratnasen on his left hand. It was as if he had inflicted a blow on himself. He was unable to bear the pain. He dropped the sword from his hand. It was then taken as an indication of his admitting defeat – not because he had failed in the sword-fight, but because of sheer ill-luck. Anyway the fort was handed over to Manikyasen, and Ratnasen went back to Ratnapuri, a sad man. Ever since then, Manikyasen had remained his enemy number one.

His queen, Ramadevi, told him: "It's not the time to remember old rivalry and enmity. The tiger is struggling for life, and it must be saved at all costs. You must arrange for that flower from Manikyapuri."

"All right," said Ratnasen, "I shall secure the flower, but only after a fight with Manikyasen."

"Is that wise at this juncture?" Queen Ramadevi expressed her apprehension. "How're you certain that you'll defeat Manikyasen? Suppose he destroys the flower while you fight? Who'll be the

loser? Who'll suffer shame?"

"How else can we save the tiger?" Ratnasen appeared desperate.

"I've found a way out," said Ramadevi, with a smile. "Listen to me patiently. Do you know that our son and Manikyasen's daughter, Princess Manjula, are in love with each other? Let's arrange their wedding. There won't be any rivalry or hatred or enmity between the two kingdoms. And we'll get the flower as well."

Contrary to the queen's expectations, King Ratnasen was only angry on hearing Ramadevi's proposal. "No! I can't accept the daughter of my lifelong enemy as my daughter-



in-law!"

The queen did not get excited or upset. She kept her cool. "Look at that! The tiger which should be normally living in the forest and leading a ferocious life, is living in the company of human beings, forgetting all its natural habits and instincts. It does not have any animosity against human beings. If that could happen, can't human beings forget their anger, hatred and prejudices? It's a shame! After all these years, you're still nourishing your enmity towards Manikyasen! It was you who killed the mother tiger. The cub should have treated you like its enemy. But does it show any hatred towards you? It had forgotten everything long ago. You haven't changed a bit! No intelligent person will behave like this!"

The truth in what the queen said struck Ratnasen immediately. He thought for a while. "What you say is correct, my queen!" he said. "No, I

have no objection to their marriage. But before that we must get the flower."

The royal physician was listening to their conversation all the while. "Your majesty, there's no time to lose," he remarked. "Let's prepare the medicine with whatever herbs I have. It was only a ruse to bring about a change in you that I mentioned about the flower. All misunderstanding has been removed. There's no more animosity or anger; and everything is leading to a happy alliance!"

"Oh! That means you're not only a physician but a psychiatrist as well!" remarked Ratnasen. "You can cure even enmity between kingdoms. I'm happy. I must reward you properly. Here, take this pearl necklace!" The king removed his necklace and presented it to the royal physician, who accepted it after bowing low to Ratnasen.





Who was the first to conduct heart transplant in India?

– Jyotiranjana Biswal, Durgapur

Dr. P. Venugopal, of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, performed the first successful heart transplant operation in India, on August 3, 1994.

What is the meaning of 'Zebra-crossing'?

– Basanti Samal, Dhenkanal

A portion of the street marked by stripes (yellow or white) for the use of pedestrians to cross over, where they have priority over vehicular traffic is called zebra-crossing. Zebras have stripes.

Which is the 'Pink City' of India? Why is it so called?

– Rupesh Shinde, Nipani

In 1875, Prince Albert of England was to visit Jaipur. Maharaja Sawai Man Singh had the entire city painted in pink for that occasion. Hence the sobriquet "Pink City".

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– Stanford

He who is firm and resolute in will moulds the world to himself.

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– Franklin



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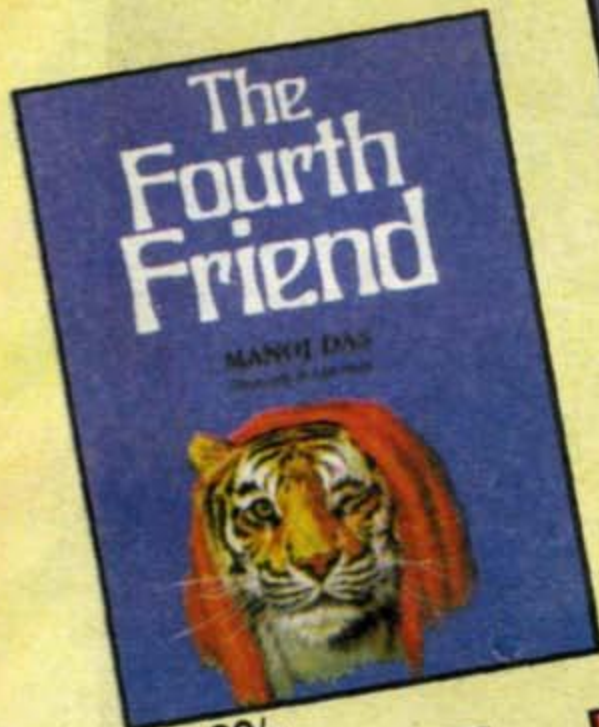
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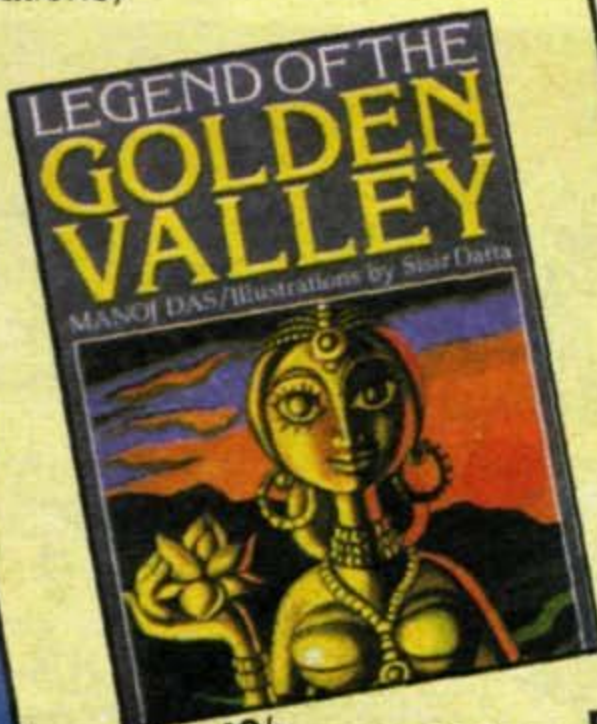


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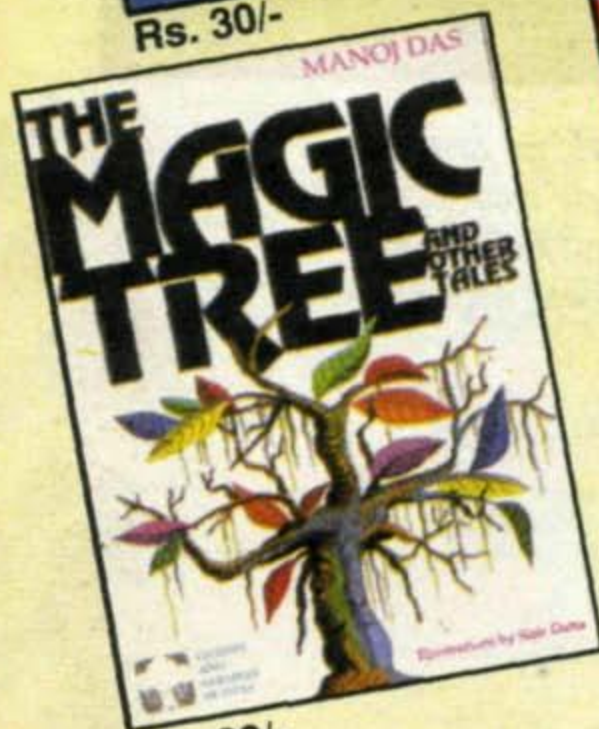
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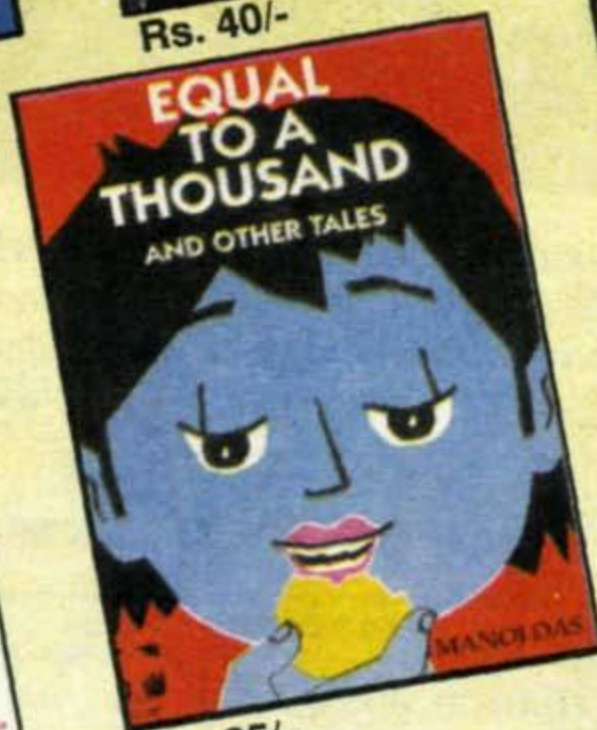
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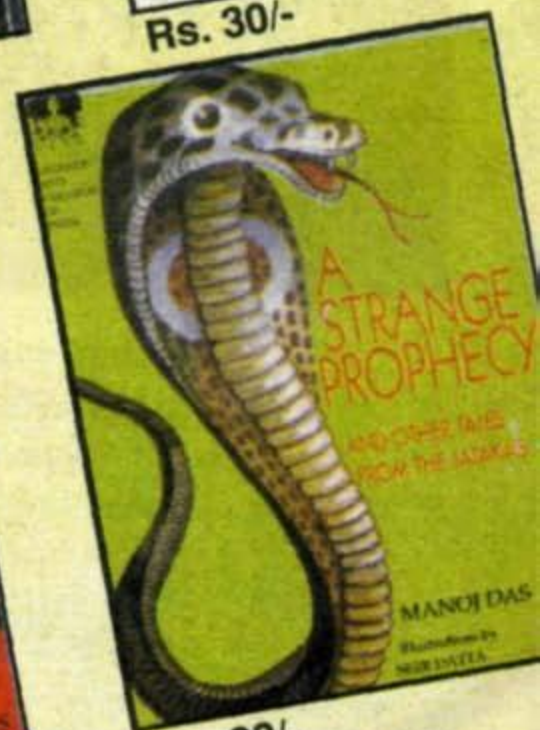
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